R. V. PARULEKAR FELICITATION VOLUME



Shri R. V. PARULEKAR

Director, Indian Institute of Education, Bombay

[From a photograph taken at Bombay on the occasion of the celebration of his 71st birthday.

Shri R. V. PARULEKAR FELICITATION VOLUME

Issued under the auspices of Shri R. V. Parulekar's 71st Birthday Celebration Committee

---

1956

Printed by V. D. Limaye at the India Printing Works, 9 Bakehouse Lane, Fort, Bombay, and Published by A. N. Samant, 168-C Vincent Road, Dadar, Bombay 14, for Shri R. V. Parulekar's 71st Birthday Celebration Committee.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE LIFE AND EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF SHRI PARULEKAR BY J. P. NAIK	ix
THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (An extract from the Thesis submitted to the Leeds University for the M.Ed. Degree in 1923)	1
MASS EDUCATION IN INDIA	41
LITERACY IN INDIA	89
LITERACY IN INDIA IN PRE-BRITISH DAYS	212
A STUDY OF CORRELATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND LITERACY FIGURES OF THE BOMBAY PROVINCE—1931 AND 1941	246
THE PLACE OF LITERACY IN SOCIAL EDUCATION IN INDIA	258
APPENDIX I—List of Students who have obtained a Research Degree under the guidance of Shri Parulekar	269
APPENDIX II—List of Volumes published so far in the Narayanrao Topiwala Memorial Educational Research Series	270

PREFACE

Shri J. P. Naik of Gargoti conceived the idea of presenting Shri R. V. Parulekar with a Volume of his important Educational Writings published in different periodicals on the auspicious occasion of his 71st Birthday. He discussed this proposal informally with a number of persons and when it was found that a warm support to the proposal was forthcoming, a Meeting of the Friends, Students and Admirers of Shri Parulekar was held and a Celebration Committee was duly appointed to sponsor the proposal. The names of the members of the Committee and its Office-Bearers are given elsewhere.

In the light of the amount that was likely to be collected, the following programme of celebrations was drawn up at the Meeting:—

(*a*) A volume of the selected Educational Writings of Shri R. V. Parulekar should be published;

(*b*) A Dinner-Meeting should be arranged in Bombay on 7th July 1956 to felicitate Shri Parulekar on his 71st Birthday and the Volume of his selected writings should be presented to him on the occasion; and

(*c*) Wherever possible, prizes associated with the name of Shri Parulekar should be instituted in places and institutions with which he was intimately connected.

The task of selecting the writings of Shri Parulekar for the proposed volume was entrusted to Shri J. P. Naik, who also wrote an introductory article on the Life and Educational contribution of Shri Parulekar. The Committee is grateful to him for the efficient manner in which he has carried out these tasks within a short time in spite of his numerous pre-occupations elsewhere and at the cost of personal inconvenience, and also to Shri C. L. Bakshi for going through the proofs.

It gives me great pleasure to thank on behalf of the Committee all those who have helped us in this endeavour either by contributing to the fund, or by paying their homage to Shri Parulekar in their letters addressed to the Committee. The Committee is much indebted to the

Local Self-Government Institute of Bombay and the Progress of Education of Poona as without their permission and co-operation this Volume would not have seen the light of day. The Committee also thanks Sarvashri B. M. Kapadia, S. R. Desai, H. S. Kanvinde and Maheshwar V. Thakur for their valued and helpful co-operation. But for such overwhelming response from all quarters the Committee would not have succeeded in paying adequate homage to this doyen of Indian Education.

Bombay,
1st July 1956.

A.N.S.

THE LIFE AND EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF Shri R. V. PARULEKAR

BY

J. P. NAIK,

Secretary, Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth, Gargoti

1. **Introductory:** This volume of the selected writings of Shri R. V. Parulekar will meet a long-felt need of the educational world. His studies on the problem of literacy have been so profound and have made so great a mark on the students of fundamental education that his books have been constantly in demand, not only from the students of education in India, but even from those in other parts of the world. Unfortunately most of his writings have recently been out of print and requests for the supply of their copies had to be reluctantly replied to in the negative. The publication of this volume on the auspicious occasion when its author completes seventy years of age will, therefore, be regarded as a blessing by educationists interested in the problem of mass literacy, especially because it brings together, for the first time, most of his earlier writings which were scattered in the old issues of different journals. No words can, therefore, be adequate to express the gratitude of the teaching profession to the Celebrations Committee for having made this book available to the public in so attractive a form and at so low a price.

The Celebrations Committee have naturally approached their problem from the personal point of view and have timed the publication of this volume on the seventy-first birthday of Shri Parulekar. But it would not be out of place to point out that there is a wider national significance also for this occasion. The framers of the Second Five-Year Plan were confronted with a situation similar to that which Shri Parulekar has been trying to solve for the last 25 years. On the one hand they found that there is an intense desire for the spread of education among the people and on the other, they were faced with such a shortage of funds that only a sum of about Rs. 300 crores could be assigned to education as against a demand of Rs. 1,080 crores. They were, therefore, compelled to suggest that economy devices like the shift system which are being advocated by Shri Parulekar should be seriously considered by educational administrators during the Second Five-Year Plan and that the available resources should be so utilised as to secure the maximum expansion possible. It, therefore, goes without saying that teachers and administrators throughout the country will soon have to study this problem of balancing our vast educational needs against the slender resources now available and that they will also be com-

pelled to work out several economy devices with the ultimate object of realising the constitutional directive that free and compulsory primary education upto 14 years shall be provided for every child by 1961. The publication of this volume is, therefore, very opportune as it will enable the Education Departments of the States to understand properly "the mechanics of educational expansion in an under-developed economy" and would materially assist in realising the targets which have been defined in the Second Five-Year Plan.

The principal object of this article is to pay a tribute to this grand old teacher of the Bombay State and to join with his friends and admirers in a prayer that he should be blessed with a long and peaceful life and that he be spared to serve the educational needs of the country until his long cherished dream of a hundred per cent literacy is realised. It would not be out of place, however, to precede this tribute by a narration of the main events of his personal life.

2. **Early life and education (1886-1911):** The biography of a teacher, or even of an educational administrator like Shri Parulekar, is never crowded and can be briefly summarised. Shri R. V. Parulekar, or "Ramabhau" as he is more intimately known to his circle of friends, was born in the village of Parule of the Vengurla Taluka in the Ratnagiri District on 7th of July 1886, as the eldest son of a family of Goud Saraswat Brahmins. His father, Shri Vithal Govind Parulekar, was a landlord in fairly easy circumstances. But by about 1892, he lost all his lands as a result of a family settlement and had to maintain himself by running a small shop. This gave but a meagre income at best and as he had a large family to maintain, Ramabhau had to obtain his education against a background of financial difficulties. In Maharashtra this is, by no means, an unusual feature of the education of children in lower middle class families.

The village of Parule appears to have a fairly big population in the Census Reports; but it is divided into 32 hamlets each of which has only a small population. Fortunately, however, the hamlet in which Ramabhau was born had a local primary school which taught upto primary standards VI—the highest standard of the primary course as it then existed. To this humble school, Ramabhau was sent as a student at the age of seven and he remained there till 1897 when he completed primary standard V. His father then thought it desirable to send him to an English school and as no such provision existed in Parule, he shifted his entire family to Vengurla where the Municipality conducted a small Anglo-Vernacular Middle School. Ramabhau studied at this school from 1897 to 1902 and completed the first five standards of the secondary school course. He was then sent to the Bhandari High School at Malvan where he studied from 1902 to 1904 and passed the Matriculation Examination in the latter year.

Ordinarily this would have meant an end of all education for Ramabhau because his father did not have the financial resources to send him to a college. But fortunately Ramabhau had stood high in the Matriculation Examination so that he was able to secure a scholarship in the Elphinstone College of Bombay. The amount of the scholarship was small—Rs. 10 per month—but it was further augmented by a loan scholarship of Rs. 10 p.m. from a charitable fund. The amount of the scholarship itself was to be increased to Rs. 15 in the Intermediate Class and to Rs. 20 in the B.A. Classes. In those days of low prices, even this small sum of Rs. 20 to 30 was adequate to meet all the expenses of a college student with simple habits. Ramabhau, therefore, joined the Elphinstone College in Bombay in 1905. As he passed every college examination in the second class and secured a high rank, the college scholarship was awarded to him year after year and he was able to complete his college education and obtain the B.A. degree, with Physics and Chemistry as optional subjects, in 1908. These were the first years when he left the rural surroundings of his childhood and stayed in a metropolitan city like Bombay, devoting himself exclusively to his studies. Looking back, Ramabhau recalls them as one of the happiest periods of his life.

It is the general law of the world that sorrow and happiness succeed each other like night and day and very soon after his happy college days were over, a period of storm and stress came into Ramabhau's life. Early in 1909, he lost his father so that he was called upon, not only to maintain himself in Bombay, but also to support, in his native place, a large family which consisted of his mother, two younger sisters * and a brother. He had, therefore, to cut out all his ambitions of further studies and seek employment as a part-time assistant master in the Maratha High School which was then located in Angrevadi, Girgaum. He served this institution for three years; but as the salary that he received was not adequate to meet his needs, he had to engage in private tuitions—both in the morning and at night. One of his students of this period was a European lady who wanted to learn Sanskrit and who used to address him as "Pandit Parulekar". He stayed at such a distance from her residence that he lost nearly the whole of his morning in this single tuition, but the sum of Rs. 20 which she paid every month was too important to be lost. The recollection of adversities successfully overcome is always a pleasant pastime and I have often listened with great interest and pleasure to Ramabhau's inimitable description of his miserable life during this period. It must, however, have been very tiresome indeed to do a number of tuitions and part-time teaching work and in addition, to prepare for the M.A. degree on which he had set his heart. But Ramabhau persisted

* Of his four sisters, two had been married prior to 1909.

valiantly and obtained the M.A. degree (with Chemistry as principal subject) in 1911. His financial difficulties lengthened the period of study to three years and he also failed to secure a class. But Masters of Arts were rare in those days and soon afterwards, his immediate financial worries came to an end when the Topivala High School of Malvan invited him to be its Head Master (1912). Ramabhau thereupon left Bombay and did not return again to it until sixteen years later.

3. **Headmaster of the Topivala High School, Malvan (1912-28):** From 1912 to 1928, Ramabhau worked as the Head Master of the Topivala High School at Malvan. Supported by the generous family of the Topivala Desais which has contributed several lakhs of rupees to the cause of education in this State, this High School was already a promising institution in 1912. But under the able guidance of Ramabhau who is a first-rate teacher, it soon rose in stature and became one of the best High Schools in the Ratnagiri District. His great scholarship, keen sense of humour and super-abundant kindliness made him loved by his students some of whom have since risen to great eminence in public life. His democratic temperament and infinite capacity to adjust to all angularities made him an efficient Head Master who was able to carry all his colleagues with him and also to establish cordial relations with the Department and the public. The Topivala High School, therefore, soon began to increase in strength and put forth better results. Shri Anant Shivaji Desai Topivala who had only promised a small donation of Rs. 5,000 when the High School was started and named after him in 1911, soon began to love the institution and gave munificent support for acquisition of lands and construction of buildings. He also endowed it with a donation of Rs. 80,000. In the departmental circles also, the reputation of the High School stood high and Shri R. V. Parulekar was looked upon as one of the ablest of Head Masters in the State.

Today few people realise how difficult a job it was to work as a Head Master of a secondary school during this period. Those were years of great political unrest when even the functions of the Education Department were partly of a police character and it was required to see that no subversive activities of any type were carried on in any recognised school and that no teacher committed the sin of infecting his students with a sense of patriotism. The rules and regulations of the Department were extremely strict and were enforced with a rigour which would be difficult to believe. The European Inspectors of schools were a terror to the humble Head Masters of private secondary schools and the Indian Inspectors often proved to be even worse than their masters. To add to all such insults, a further injury to private schools was done by the then policy of the Education Department which spent a very large portion of the funds available on improving a few

Shri R. V. PARULEKAR



Headmaster, Topivala
High School, Malvan
(1912-28)

Shri R. V. PARULEKAR



Secretary, Municipal Schools Committee,
Bombay
(1928-41)

Government schools as "models" to private enterprise, so that the non-Government secondary schools could only be given miserably small grants-in-aid. A sensitive and proud soul like that of Ramabhau chafed at the humiliation to which the Head Master of a private school had often to submit. His creative instinct also revolted against the cramping influence of the Departmental regulations and he began to feel that secondary education would really be better off if a greater freedom were to be allowed to the schools and if the Head Masters were entrusted with a greater responsibility. He also felt that if the Department would drop the idea of developing Government High Schools as models and would spend the bulk of the funds available on improving the grants-in-aid to private schools, the cause of secondary education would progress on sounder lines.* It is not necessary to describe in detail either the numerous experiences of his Head Mastership with the humorous description of which Ramabhau often regales his friends, or with his deep musings on the reform of secondary education. It would be enough to state that they formed the basis of his research work in England and of his later attempts to educate and improve the secondary schools of this State.

In spite of the professional difficulties described above, his long tenure of office as Head Master of the Topivala High School brought two great opportunities to Ramabhau. The first opportunity came in 1916 when he was selected for admission to the Secondary Training College at Bombay. He stayed here for a year and obtained the S.T.C. Diploma with a first-class. This college had been started in 1906, but even in 1916, the training of the secondary teachers was still in its infancy. The entire staff of the college consisted of two members—a European Principal and an Indian Vice-Principal. Ramabhau's reminiscences of this collegiate year are of very great interest. Apart from the light which they throw on his own personal life, they are of importance as depicting the rather crude manner in which teachers were trained at this period when the teaching of general and special methods was regarded as the be-all and end-all of all training institutions. An even more important opportunity, however, came six years later when the late Shri Anant Shivaji Desai Topivala gave a scholarship of Rs. 400 per month to enable Ramabhau to go to England with a view to obtaining a post-graduate degree in education. Ramabhau accordingly sailed in January 1922, obtained the T.D. of the University of London and the M.Ed. of the University of Leeds, and returned to India in February 1924. For his M.Ed. degree, he wrote a thesis on *the Problem of Education in Bombay Presidency (with special reference to*

---

* In this connection, the interested student may refer to Ramabhau's paper on *Government Secondary Schools* published in the *Progress of Education*, January and March 1926. This document has not been reprinted here, mainly because its thesis is now out-dated. But it created a veritable sensation at the time of its publication.

higher education) under the guidance of Professor Strong. This document was referred to Sir Michael Sadler as an examiner who appreciated it very greatly and recommended that it should be published forthwith. Unfortunately, this recommendation was not seriously taken up by anyone so that an excellent work remained unknown for a number of years. Recently it became financially possible to publish the thesis; but the proposal had to be dropped on the ground that most of its recommendations had come to be accepted by Government and that it had largely become obsolete due to sheer lapse of time. The excellent chapter on the *Medium of Instruction* included in the second part of the thesis, however, has been printed in this volume,* partly because the valuable material which it contains is still generally unknown and partly as an indication of the high standard of research work which was done by Ramabhau for his M.Ed. Examination.

It is worthy of record that Ramabhau had the unique good fortune to study under eminent educationists like John Adam and T. Percy Nunn. Both the professors were greatly impressed by Ramabhau and the latter in particular has spoken about his scholarship and capacity in glowing terms. "I wish it to be clear," wrote Nunn in a testimonial issued in 1922, "that Mr. Parulekar is, in my judgment, a teacher and a student of great merit, judged by any standard, and, in particular, that he stands high among the best men we have received from India. In addition to attending the ordinary lectures and classes in this College (including special courses on the teaching of English and Geography), he has read assiduously in the libraries of the India Office and the British Museum with a view to the thesis which he will present for the degree of M.A. His research has direct reference to the educational problems of the Bombay Presidency and can hardly fail to increase his value to the service of his native province." Coming from an authority like Nunn, this is indeed a great tribute; and the review of Ramabhau's later life shows that it was well deserved and even prophetic.

On his return from England, Ramabhau's status as an educationist of repute was accepted in official and non-official circles alike. The first formal recognition of this came when he was appointed as the only Head Master on the *Joint Examination Board* which used to conduct the Matriculation and S.L.C. Examinations (1925). The second recognition came soon afterwards in 1927 when he was appointed as a Member of the *Committee on Primary and Secondary Education*, known popularly as the Hesketh Committee. The report of this Committee was published in 1929 and it shows, to some extent, the influence of the ideas which Ramabhau had stated in his thesis and which have been briefly incorporated in a preceding paragraph. It was

* *See* pp. 1-40, *supra*.

obviously impossible for the Committee to subscribe to the radical views which Ramabhau held on the subject. He, therefore, had to resort to a non-official platform to put forward his ideas and it was one of the lucky coincidences of his life that he now met the late Shri M. R. Paranjape. Both Shri Paranjape and Shri Parulekar were champions of the cause of private secondary schools and their desire to reduce departmental control and increase the status and independence of private schools was equally strong. They, therefore, made a common cause and the *Progress of Education* which Shri Paranjape edited from Poona carried on a strong and continuous crusade on behalf of the private schools. Ramabhau always recalls his friendship with Shri M. R. Paranjape as one of the brightest spots in his life and students of education need not be told of the great service which this pair of teachers has done to further the independence and autonomy of private enterprise in secondary education.

4. **The Secretary of the Schools Committee, Bombay (1928-41):** In 1928 came another break in Ramabhau's career—he retired from the Topivala High School and decided to seek employment elsewhere. Just about this time, the post of the Secretary of the Bombay Municipal Schools Committee became vacant and Ramabhau's friends induced him to apply for it. Fortunately for primary education, Ramabhau's application succeeded and he was selected as the Secretary of the Schools Committee of the Bombay Corporation. For the following 13 years, therefore, his home was in Bombay and he continued to hold the post of the Secretary of the Schools Committee and to administer the primary schools within the area of the City.

This appointment to a high and well-paid post was a great blessing, both personal and public. From the personal point of view, it brought in a period of comparative financial ease and stability for the family. According to the traditional custom, Ramabhau had been married in 1902 at the early age of fifteen and Sou. Sitabai was then only nine. Their family life began in 1907 and their first child, a son, was born in 1910. By 1928, the family had grown larger with six children and in addition Ramabhau was required to support and educate a number of other dependants as well. It was becoming increasingly difficult to fulfil all the obligations of such a large family in an out-of-the-way place like Malvan and on the meagre salary which the Head Master of the Topivala High School was allowed to draw. The change-over to Bombay, combined with the larger salary that now became available, made it possible to provide better education to the children and the dependants and also brought in freedom from many a domestic worry that is essentially financial in origin.

From the public point of view, the gain was even greater and of far-reaching significance. His appointment as Secretary of the Schools

Committee brought him face to face with the problem of mass education with which he had little to do in the past. In the whole of his thesis, scholarly as it is, there is not even a reference to the outstanding problems of primary education to which he was to render so significant a service in later years. Even in his writings published prior to 1933 there is little or no reference to the problems of literacy or primary education. But his earlier absorption with secondary education now disappeared and his alert mind now began to grapple with the problems of mass education. As a Secretary of the Schools Committee, he was called upon to deal with almost every aspect of primary education, viz. the enforcement of compulsion which had been introduced in two Wards of the City a little earlier in 1925; the recruitment as well as academic and administrative control of a very large body of primary teachers; the difficulties involved in controlling primary schools through an ultra-democratic agency like the Schools Committee; the shortage of buildings; the paucity of funds; the intricate problems of curricula and teaching methods; and the large prevalence of problems like wastage or stagnation which made primary education largely ineffective in producing literacy. It took about five years for him to understand the problems of mass education in India and to work out a tentative solution for them. But by 1933 his academic and alert mind had prepared a tentative programme of mass education, not only for the City of Bombay, not even for the State of Bombay, but for the entire Indian continent itself.

The peculiar problem which Ramabhau was called upon to solve in the Municipal Schools Committee was that of finance. On the one hand, he found that the number of children to be educated was continually increasing, partly as a result of the growth of population in the City and partly in consequence of a growing desire for education. On the other hand, he found that the funds available for primary education were getting scantier. As stated before, Ramabhau became Secretary to the Schools Committee in 1928. In the following year, the world economic depression set in and its effects were very keenly felt in India from 1930. Cuts and retrenchment became, therefore, the order of the day and the Schools Committee was required to solve the apparently impossible problem of educating more children on an inadequate and inelastic budget. It is to the credit of Ramabhau that he studied the problem in its sociological, historical and comparative aspects and came to the conclusion that new and more appropriate techniques of educational expansion had to be adopted if the goal of universal education was to be realised in an under-developed economy like that of India. He set forth his conclusions in this respect in a small pamphlet entitled *Mass Education in India* * which made an unobtrusive appearance in an early issue of the Local Self-Government Quarterly in 1934.

* *See* pp 41-88, *supra*.

5. **Mass Education in India (1934):** It is not improbable that even the publication of this pamphlet with its revolutionary ideas would have passed unnoticed and that it might have created no bigger stir than the falling of a single rain-drop in an expansive lake. But a miracle happened and the *Times of India* which has a capacity to make or unmake fames, decided to review the pamphlet. On the 23rd of March 1934, therefore, a well-drafted and appreciative leading article appeared in its columns and it recommended the scheme propounded by Shri R. V. Parulekar for the serious consideration of the people. After making out a case for *immediate* expansion of mass education and after pointing out that the country was not in a position to afford the huge financial outlay which a scheme of compulsory education drawn up on the traditional pattern would require, the article proceeded to state how Shri Parulekar proposed to solve the problem and said:

> " The necessity for an immediate expansion in primary education urges Mr. Parulekar to make suggestions for drastic reform. They are based on the experience of other countries and are eminently practical. In the first place he suggests that the five-year course of primary education should be reduced to one of four years. This is in consonance with the view of the Hartog Committee that a minimum course of four years is sufficient for ensuring literacy. Secondly, the compulsory age-period should be changed from 6-11 to 7-11. Thirdly, the number of subjects taught in the primary schools should be revised in order to make them simple and more easily understood by the children of the masses. The object of this suggestion is to concentrate on the essentials, the minimum required for literacy. Fourthly, the number of pupils per teacher in the primary schools should be increased from thirty to sixty on the rolls. This is the crux of the problem of educational expansion, and undoubtedly the most controversial. It should be noted that in the earlier stages England, Germany and Japan, among other countries, allowed sixty or more pupils per teacher. The Bombay teacher is not incompetent as compared with teachers in other parts of the world. Lastly, wherever classes of sixty pupils cannot be arranged for, a system of part-time instruction may be introduced, thus making it possible for each teacher to look after not less than sixty pupils.
>
> " All these suggestions make inroads on ' efficiency ' and fancy theories, but they have to be seriously considered if it is desired to make an end of illiteracy in the near future. It is only too obvious that the administration of the present system, limited as it is to one-third of the total number of children of school-going age, costs every anna that Government and local bodies can afford, and without a miracle it is unlikely that there will

be an expansion of education on present lines for the next hundred years. The problem resolves itself into a choice between efficiency and expansion, the 'efficient instruction' of the few and the 'literacy' of the many. Assuming that compulsion is desirable, it is for this generation to decide whether it will be achieved in our life-time or left to the Greek Kalends."

At the time when this article appeared in the press, there was a very large section of intelligentsia in this State which almost regarded it as a religious duty to read the leading articles of the *Times of India* every morning. On the 23rd of March 1934, therefore, thousands of intellectuals in the State suddenly awoke to the fact that one Mr. R. V. Parulekar who was the Secretary of the Municipal Schools Committee in Bombay had put forward an arresting scheme for the development of mass education. The number of such persons increased still further because the *Times of India* really started a chain of other sympathetic reviews in the press. The *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Free Press Journal* also wrote leaders on the problem on the 3rd of April and the *Bombay Sentinel* followed suit on the 6th of the same month. The Marathi press also did not lag behind and papers like the *Dnyanprakash*, *Sakal*, *Pratibha*, *Nirbhid* and *Chitramaya Jagat* took up the problem and wrote explanatory and commending articles. The Gujarati press also accorded an enthusiastic welcome to the proposals. In a short time, therefore, the task begun by the *Times of India* was almost fully accomplished and Ramabhau's scheme had reached the leading citizens from all parts of the State and was being discussed in all official and non-official circles connected with primary education. "I awoke one morning," says Ramabhau, "and found myself famous."

Is it merely due to the accident of the decision of the *Times of India* to write a leading article thereon that was responsible to secure such publicity to this pamphlet? Or was it due to any larger and deeper historical significance that the pamphlet attracted such universal attention and received so warm a commendation? It is true that the *Times of India* did a very signal service to the cause of mass education by reviewing this pamphlet in a leading article and that it materially contributed to securing public recognition to the proposals which it contained. But it is also equally true to say that the pamphlet happened to be published at a critical time in the history of compulsory education in this State and that it would soon have attracted attention to itself, even if the *Times of India* has not selected it for front-rank publicity. The British administrators had opposed the public demand for compulsory primary education on the ground that, in a poor country like India, the principle of compulsory education was neither *desirable* nor *practicable*. The efforts of social workers like Gopal Krishna Gokhale had succeeded in establishing the *desirability* of compulsory education and

the Bombay Primary Education Act of 1923 had given authority to the local bodies to introduce compulsion in urban and rural areas. But the practicability of a programme of universal, free and compulsory primary education had yet to be established and no one had been able to produce a scheme which the financial resources of the Government would be able to support. At this critical juncture, Ramabhau entered the scene with his revolutionary proposals and showed that even a poor country like India can have a programme of universal education and liquidate its mass illiteracy in a short time, if certain novel techniques of development which had been adopted by other nations in a similar state of economic and cultural development, were to be boldly accepted. This announcement came as a great ray of hope to Indian educators because it provided a convincing proof of the *practicability* of compulsory education in India. The pamphlet, therefore, marked a significant landmark in the history of mass education in India and carried the work of Gokhale a step further. It would, therefore, have been impossible to ignore it altogether and it was bound to create a stir in educational circles, sooner or later.

It was not to be expected that so revolutionary an approach to the problem would remain unnoticed by the Department and it would not have been wrong to expect that Government would welcome the proposals whose only object was to liquidate mass illiteracy in a short time. Unfortunately, however, the ideas put forward by the *Mass Education in India* were stoutly opposed by the Education Department which resented the fact that its policy of emphasizing 'quality' rather than 'quantity' had been challenged by Ramabhau. The Officers of the Department, therefore, started a crusade against the ideology which he had put forward and a highly placed Departmental Officer went even to the extent of saying that "Shri R. V. Parulekar should be drowned in the Arabian Sea with his book". This general official opposition was also strengthened, to some extent, by adverse criticism from a few Indians as well. Some of the opponents were men of great learning and integrity who had genuine differences of opinion on the subject and who felt that a rapid expansion of education on the lines indicated by Ramabhau would water down its quality to a level that would be dangerous to the interests of the country as a whole. But a large part of the opposition came from circles which usually echoed official opinion and policies. It is also interesting to note that a section of the Marathi Press tried to give a communal colour to the controversy by suggesting that Ramabhau's proposals were a deliberate attempt to keep the education of the masses at a lower level of efficiency. But fortunately, the opposition to the proposals did not gather much strength and the support accorded to them was so general that the matter was ultimately taken to the legislature.

6. **Shri Gokhale's Resolution in the Bombay Legislative Council (1934):** *Shri L. R. Gokhale who was then a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council and was greatly impressed by the proposals of Ramabhau* moved the following resolution in the Bombay Legislative Council on 4th September 1934:—

"This Council recommends to Government that they should take immediate steps to achieve rapid expansion of mass education within the available financial resources by adopting the following, among other measures:—

(*a*) simplification of the curriculum of the lower primary schools, that is, of Standards Infant to IV, so as to confine the instructions to the three R's;

(*b*) reducing the period of instruction in the lower primary schools from five years (Infant and Standards I to IV) to four years (Standards I to IV);

(*c*) entrusting, on an average, a large number of pupils than at present to the care of one teacher;

(*d*) organising of the lower primary school instruction on the basis of the shift system; and

(*e*) imparting of part-time instruction wherever necessary by the employment of peripatetic teachers."

A very interesting debate followed and several members took part in the discussion. But the Hon'ble the Education Minister of this period, Diwan Bahadur S. T. Kambli, was not prepared to accept it. He pleaded that there was a good deal of difference of opinion among the educationists themselves on the points raised in the resolution. He, however, assured the House that it would be carefully considered. The resolution was withdrawn on this assurance, but Government did nothing to implement it, or even to examine it in detail.

7. **Literacy in India (1939):** This failure of a high-level attempt to induce Government to work out a programme of universal education on an unorthodox basis was a great set-back to the cause. Ramabhau, however, was undaunted and decided to organise educative propaganda for his proposals. With this object in view, he published a small book called *Literacy in India* * in 1939. The fundamental thesis put forward in this book was the same as in the *Mass Education in India*; but it had some additional and distinctive features. To begin with, it made a successful attempt, the first of its type in India, to correlate the educational statistics of school attendance with the census statistics of adult literacy. This task had been attempted in the past on several occasions; but no one had yet succeeded in demonstrating the

---

* *See* pp 89-211, *supra*.

correct relationship between the educational and census statistics. In this interesting study, however, Ramabhau correlated the two sets of statistics and conclusively established that " the completion of the third year class gives literacy according to the census standard ". Secondly, this book examines certain aspects of primary education like wastage, stagnation and single-teacher schools. These had been wrongly emphasized in the Report of the Hartog Committee whose main conclusion was that the system of primary education in India was largely ineffective and that it would, therefore, be desirable to concentrate on ' improvement ' rather than on ' expansion '. Ramabhau declared that this would be a fatal policy to be adopted in India. He admits that there is a good deal of wastage and ineffectiveness in the existing system, but he also points out that the extent of these evils has been greatly exaggerated. His further contention is that the only way to reduce these evils is not to go back and emphasize quality, but to go ahead very rapidly and to introduce universal compulsory education at an early date. Lastly, the book again emphasizes the proposals put forward in the earlier pamphlet and adduces further evidence in their support.

A few extracts from this publication will show the main arguments put forward. " The purpose of this book," writes Ramabhau, " is to give a message of hope to those who will have the privilege of guiding the destinies of future India, that bad as our educational system has been, it has not been so bad as it is made out to be. The situation is hopeful if only we cease to be guided by the ideals of an advanced nation like England and adopt measures and practices which are more suited to the conditions of our people and the financial resources of our country." With reference to the minimum education required for the attainment of permanent literacy, Ramabhau points out that the book " devotes some pages to a critical examination of the available statistical and other data relating to mass education not only of this country, but of other countries as well. . . . The view prevailing in India today is that no child can be literate unless he completes the fourth-year class of the primary school; but the statistical inquiry undertaken with the object of testing the validity of this view showed that, as in the Dutch East Indies, in India also a child acquires census literacy if he is able to complete the third-year class of a primary school and that he retains it in his after-life. The Indian official view about the minimum four-class system necessary for acquiring literacy has tended to create exaggerated notions of the wastage problem and has been mainly responsible for the undue pessimism about India's capacity to finance schemes of universal primary education ". Ramabhau then proceeds to point out that " the percentage of literacy in India is very low and that its growth has been alarmingly tardy. The most potent cause of this halting progress is the smallness of the number of pupils under instruction in the schools. A study of the educational statistics of other countries showed that soon after

their deciding to launch upon a programme of mass education, the numbers in schools have swollen to a remarkable extent. In India, on the other hand, at no time has this occurred. It should be remembered that in any scheme of mass education, 'education must pour and not trickle'. The key to a rapid expansion of mass education in India, therefore, lies in increasing the numbers under instruction in schools as quickly as possible". Ramabhau then proceeds to analyse the different causes which have led to this slow progress of mass education in the past. He admits that the inability to find the necessary funds has, among other things, contributed materially to the slow expansion of primary education. But he also contends that this has not been the *only*, and not even the *main* difficulty involved. His own analysis is that the slow progress of Indian education is more due to "a lack of missionary zeal on the part of the administrators of education" and to "the tutelage of the teaching and administrative staffs" of the Department who have "found it impossible to depart from the routine and take initiative to explore fresh avenues of reform". "This has been the fault of the system rather than of individuals," writes Ramabhau, "because the fear of expressing views which may go counter to those of persons in authority has helped to stifle all initiative. Unless the system is so changed that this spirit of apathy and implicit acquiescence yields place to one of fearless enquiry and expression, there is little hope for the future of Indian education." Ramabhau then stresses the importance of literacy in a programme of national development and concludes with the following magnificent peroration:—

> "An almost impassioned plea has been raised in these pages for the organisation of a natonwide drive for the early liquidation of mass illiteracy in the hope and belief that literacy would add to the moral and material welfare of the Indian people. The study of history tells us that every nation, the moment it aspired to raise its status in the eyes of the world, has, as the first urgent measure, attempted to remove illiteracy and that its progress has synchronised with the liquidation of illiteracy. It is arguable, of course, that this may not happen in our unhappy land. But if water chokes, what shall we drink?"

8. **Literacy in India in Pre-British Days (1940):** Shortly after the publication of the *Literacy in India*, Ramabhau produced, in collaboration with Shri M. R. Paranjape, a small pamphlet entitled *Literacy in India in Pre-British Days.** The circumstances that led to the preparation of this paper were rather peculiar. In October 1931, Mahatma Gandhi had made an observation at the Round Table Conference in London that "India is more illiterate today than it was fifty or a hundred years ago . . . because the British administrators, when they came to

---

* *See* pp. 212-45, *supra*.

India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out ". Sir Philip Hartog challenged this statement and wrote three memoranda, the chief purpose of which was " to remove, if possible, once for all, the imaginary bases for the assertions not infrequently made in India that the British Government systematically destroyed the indigenous system of elementary schools, and with it a literacy which the schools are presumed to have created ". Thus began a memorable controversy in which some educationists argued that the statement made by Gandhiji at the Round Table Conference was fundamentally correct while others were inclined to think that his observations were based on a myth which had no sound historical foundations. Ramabhau and Paranjape took up this problem for a thorough investigation in the research paper mentioned above. In the first part of the paper which was contributed by Ramabhau, it was proved that Gandhiji's statement which was made at a time when the literacy figures of the 1931 census were not available, must be regarded as fundamentally correct because the percentage of adult literacy given in the statistics of Adam (1835-38) is higher than that of 1911 and almost the same as that of 1921. In the other half of the paper which was contributed by Shri M. R. Paranjape, it is first established that the word ' school ' included two types of institutions in the early nineteenth century—a regular ' elementary school ' of the ordinary type and a ' centre of domestic instruction ' in which a teacher gave education to a few children at a time. If this definition of a ' school ' is properly understood and if due allowance is made for the large number of centres of domestic instruction which then existed, Paranjape proves out that Adam's Report regarding the existence of a lakh of ' schools ' in Bengal and Bihar ceases to be a ' legend ' and begins to appear as ' a conceivable fact '. He also proves that the British Administrators were not entirely free from the charge of having made deliberate attempts to destroy the indigenous schools, although a large majority of them died of sheer neglect. Between the two of them, therefore, Ramabhau and Paranjape fully vindicated the stand taken by Mahatma Gandhi. In order, however, to guard himself against any chauvinistic exaggerations, Ramabhau clearly enunciated the broad limitations to which his conclusions are subject. " It is not the purpose of this paper," writes Ramabhau, " to condemn the educational administration of India in the British period as bad in every respect or to praise the indigenous system of education which existed in India a hundred years ago as good in every way. Even the most violent critic of the British Government will admit that modern educational institutions in India have been a great contribution of the British people towards the uplift of the country. But even a great blessing may have its defects. A white elephant may be a valuable gift or a source of anxiety according to resources of the presentee. The modern primary schools have been valuable institutions from the educational viewpoint: but they have

hindered rather than helped the spread of literacy, with the result that in this respect the country has made no advance since the days of Adam. It is even held that India is at present less literate than she was a hundred years ago, and the view is based on good foundations. The wholesale replacement of indigenous schools by schools conducted or aided by the Education Department was not a wise step, and the contention of Indian leaders has been that if the British Government had recognised this fact early enough and not allowed the indigenous schools to decay and disappear for want of State support, British India would have shown a much better literacy figure today."

It is interesting to note that no one has yet come forward to refute the arguments advanced in this paper. It may, therefore, be assumed that the conclusions reached by Ramabhau and Paranjape have come to be largely accepted by the students of Indian education.

9. **A Period of Strains (1941-48):** In 1941, Ramabhau retired from the Municipal Schools Committee on attaining the age of 55. It was not financially possible for him to be without employment as he still had to maintain a large family and educate a number of children and dependants. Besides it is also not in his temperament to sit idle as a retired official. He, therefore, accepted the invitation of Shri M. R. Paranjape, the then Principal of the Tilak College of Education, Poona, and became a member of the College staff. For one year, these two veterans worked together and placed the Tilak College of Education on a secure footing. In the following year, however, Paranjape retired from the position and Ramabhau also left the College and went to Kolhapur where Rao Bahadur Dr. P. C. Patil, the then Education Minister of the State, had invited him to be his Educational Adviser and Secretary. Ramabhau held this position for one year and then worked as the Principal of the Maharani Tarabai Teachers' Training College, Kolhapur, for two years (1943-45). During his stay in Kolhapur I have had the privilege of working as his colleague and can, therefore, testify to the extremely valuable services that he rendered to the cause of education in Kolhapur State. It is on record that the old Kolhapur State decided to reorganise its system of primary education on the lines recommended by Ramabhau and if the experiments had been conducted for a sufficient period, some practical results to demonstrate the validity of his thesis would have been available. It was, however, very unfortunate that, owing to uncertain political conditions, the policies initiated by him were neither properly executed nor maintained for a sufficiently long period. Ramabhau had fondly hoped that the Kolhapur State would provide results to justify his theories; but that was not to be.*

* In 1930, Ramabhau and his friends had carried out an educational survey of the Sawantwadi State at the instance of the Ruler. But his proposals in the matter were not pursued, mainly on account of financial difficulties, and the scheme failed to materialise.

As stated earlier, Shri L. R. Gokhale had tried to obtain official acceptance for the views of Ramabhau as early as in 1934. This attempt, like most pioneer enterprises, failed to achieve its object. When, however, the Congress Ministry came to office in 1937, the hopes of official support were again revived. Ramabhau was appointed a member of the Joshi Committee on vocational education and of the Manshardt Committee on Adult Education. The reports of both these Committees approve of some aspects of Ramabhau's scheme. But these are so sketchy that they do not amount to an official acceptance of the scheme as a whole. A third opportunity to press for the official acceptance of his views, however, came soon afterwards in 1940 when the Provincial Board of Primary Education was constituted by Government under the Bombay Primary Education Act, 1923, as amended in 1938. This Board consisted of 12 members of whom six were elected by the School Boards and the remaining were nominated by Government. Ramabhau was nominated on this Board for the triennium beginning with 1940. Smt. Hansa Mehta, the present Vice-Chancellor of the M. S. University, Baroda, was the Chairman of the Board and its other members included Shri D. N. Desai, the present Education Minister of the State, Shri L. R. Desai, the present Principal of the A. G. Teachers' College, Ahmedabad, Shri Syed Nurullah, the present Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Muslim University, Aligarh, Shri S. R. Tawade, the then Educational Inspector, Dharwar, and myself. As was to be expected, Ramabhau placed his scheme before this Board which examined it in all aspects and unanimously recommended that it should be accepted by the Government of Bombay with the modification that the shift system should be introduced, in the first instance, in the first two standards only. Unfortunately, the Congress Ministry was out of office by the time these recommendations were made and hence the entire matter had to remain in cold storage for a few years. The problem was, however, taken up by Shri B. G. Kher, the then Education Minister of the State, when he came back to office again in 1946. Shri Kher had always been a supporter of the plans which Ramabhau had been advocating and luckily, Shri D. C. Pavate, the then Director of Education, was also a staunch advocate of the rapid expansion of education among the masses. Government, therefore, accepted the proposals made by the Provincial Board of Primary Education. The Infant Class was abolished and the ages of admission and compulsion were raised to six *plus* and seven *plus* respectively. The duration of the primary course was reduced to four years and the shift system was introduced in the first two standards. It was also decided to introduce compulsory education in the areas of all the N.L.A. Municipalities and in all villages with a population of 1,000 or more, in accordance with a planned programme of five years; and it was further announced that universal, compulsory and free primary education of four years would be introduced in all parts of the

State in a period of 10 to 12 years. With this announcement, Ramabhau won his first major victory after a continuous struggle of more than 12 years. His ideas were now officially accepted in the State of Bombay and formed the basis of one of the most outstanding programmes of educational expansion prepared by the State Governments in India during the last ten years.

These public victories for his educational theories were a great gain no doubt; but from the personal point of view, it may be said that the period of seven years between 1941 and 1948 was not a happy one on the whole. Ramabhau was now required to make a frequent change in his place of residence, first to Poona in 1941 and then to Kolhapur in 1943; and it was only in 1945 that he returned to Bombay and made it his permanent home. The increase in the cost of living due to the Second World War added materially to his financial responsibilities, especially as he had to provide for the secondary and collegiate education of a number of children and dependants. On the other hand, his income was considerably reduced because of intermittent employment. He was, therefore, required to draw largely on the accumulated reserve of his small savings. But as is usually the way with him, Ramabhau took his adversities very coolly and even in the midst of the most trying difficulties and anxieties, maintained an admirable balance of mind and an inimitable sense of humour. What is more surprising, he did not relax his studies of educational problems in any way and even under the most trying circumstances of this period, he was able to render four great services to the cause of education in this State.

10. **Publication of Manuscript Secretariat Records on Education in Bombay State (1945):** The first of these was a project on which he had set his heart for a number of years. His interest in old historical documents had been greatly kindled when he was preparing for his M.Ed. thesis in England and it was revived after 1928 when he began to stay in Bombay. He now had several opportunities to inspect and study the manuscript educational records preserved in the Bombay Secretariat, and it was his favourite pastime, even in the midst of the multifarious duties he was required to perform as the Secretary of the Schools Committee, to examine and edit these historical documents. He, therefore, decided to publish a series of selections from these records and thereby throw valuable light on the early history of education in this State. So long as he was burdened with administrative duties of one type or the other, it was not possible for him to take up this project and complete it. But as he had some leisure while working as the principal of the S.M.T.T. College, Kolhapur, he decided to bring out at least the first volume of

---

* Shri S. R. Tawade has been an enthusiastic supporter of Ramabhau and has translated *Mass Education in India* in Marathi, even at the risk of considerable official displeasure.

the projected series. With the help of Dr. B. B. Samant who was then a member of the College Staff, he collected all the documents bearing on the surveys of indigenous education conducted in the State of Bombay between 1820 and 1830 and published them, with a very masterly introduction, in a single book * which he described as the first volume of *Shri Narayanrao Topiwala Memorial Educational Research Series.* Unfortunately, he had to carry out this project with extremely limited funds and get the book printed in Kolhapur where facilities for efficient printing in English are not available. The publication, therefore, leaves much to be desired and its paper, type, size and general get-up are far from satisfactory. But in spite of its unattractive get-up, the book supplied a great need because this was the first occasion when the old educational records of the Government of Bombay were made available to the students of education in a printed form.

11. **Report on the Reorganisation of Primary Education in the City of Bombay (1948):** The second important project carried out by Ramabhau during this difficult period refers to the reorganisation of the administration of primary education in the City of Bombay. For a long time, the Bombay Corporation was thinking of reorganising the administration of the Schools Committee. When Ramabhau returned to Bombay and had some time to spare for problems of this type, the Corporation appointed him as a Special Officer to study and report on the manner in which the administration of primary education in the City was to be remodelled. With the assistance of Shri C. L. Bakshi, who had retired after a long service under the Schools Committee, Ramabhau prepared a valuable Report and submitted it to the Corporation in 1948.†

Books or reports bearing on the problems of educational administration in India are very rare and it is a general opinion that Ramabhau's Report on the Reorganisation of Primary Education in the City of Bombay is one of the most masterly documents in this field. A good administrative report can only be written by a person who combines an academic outlook with the practical experience of day-to-day administration. Such persons are very rare and we either get the academic professor of educational administration who has had no practical experience or the veteran administrator who has trained himself in a rule-of-the-thumb manner and has had no time for academic studies. It has been the good fortune of Ramabhau to be able to combine an academic outlook and a scholarly grasp of the theoretical knowledge of the subject with a very intimate experience of the difficulties of practical administra-

* This was designated *A Source Book of History of Education in the Bombay Province, Part I, Survey of Indigenous Education (1820-30).*

† This has been entitled " Report on Revision of Constitution, Powers and Duties of the School Committee of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, and on the same Educational and Administrative Problems of Primary Education in the City of Bombay." It has since been published by the Corporation (1949).

tion. Ramabhau is, therefore, one of the few persons in this State who are well qualified to write a dissertation on administrative problems and the excellence of his Report on the Reorganisation of Primary Education in the City of Bombay can always be cited as a good illustration of this theory.

It is neither possible nor necessary to enumerate here the large number of recommendations which Ramabhau has made in the course of this Report. The most important of these were three: In the first place, Ramabhau made a very strong recommendation that the administration of primary education in the City should be placed directly under the Municipal Commissioner by a suitable legislative enactment. Secondly, he stressed the importance of properly constructed buildings if compulsory primary education was to be satisfactorily enforced and suggested that a comprehensive but short-range programme should be drawn up for the purpose; and thirdly, he advocated the establishment of a Research Bureau for carrying out investigations on problems of primary education. All these recommendations were accepted by the Corporation and the Government. The old form of administration under which the Schools Committee used to function independently of the Municipal Commissioner was done away with and was replaced by an Education Committee constituted on slightly different lines. The post of the Secretary to the Schools Committee was converted into that of an Education Officer who was directly responsible to the Commissioner. The Corporation has now approved of a building programme of ten years during which period, a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs a year is proposed to be spent on the construction of primary school buildings. A Research Bureau has also been created and Dr. Smt. Madhuri Shah, Ph.D., has recently been appointed as the Officer-in-charge. This is the first Research Bureau of its type to be established by a Municipality in the whole of India, and a part of the credit for this valuable reform goes undoubtedly to the educationist who suggested it. The other recommendations of Ramabhau are also being gradually implemented. The great service which Ramabhau did to the cause of primary education in the City during his long tenure of office as Secretary of the Schools Committee is well known. But it is a curious coincidence of life that the service which he rendered to this cause *after* his retirement was even greater.

12. **The Ghate-Parulekar Committee (1947-48):** The third important service which Ramabhau did to education during this period was in his capacity as a member of the *SECONDARY SCHOOLS COMMITTEE* appointed by the Government of Bombay in 1947. This Committee consisted of two members only—Shri V. D. Ghate and Shri R. V. Parulekar and is hence popularly known as the Ghate-Parulekar Committee. Its Report, which is probably the most important docu-

ment in the history of Secondary Education in the State since 1947, examined several administrative problems such as the system of grant-in-aid to secondary schools, the rates of school-fees, the emoluments and service-conditions of secondary teachers, etc., and made a number of important recommendations. Government accepted many of them *in toto* and most of the others were adopted with slight modifications. Probably the most outstanding achievement of this Report was the introduction of a common scale of pay for *all* secondary teachers, irrespective of the fact whether they served in governmental or private school. It is known as the Ghate-Parulekar (or briefly G.P.) scale and covers the range of Rs. 80-200 for trained graduates. In addition, teachers were given dearness and some other allowances according to rates framed by Government. It also provided for reasonable security of tenure and led to the adoption of a uniform system of grant-in-aid calculated at a prescribed percentage of approved expenditure. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that this Report has done a lasting service to the cause of secondary education in general and to that of secondary teachers in particular.

13. **Educational Survey of the Ratnagiri District (1947-48):** The fourth important educational contribution of Ramabhau during this period was to hold an educational survey of the Ratnagiri District. It is well known that the expression " village ", as used in census records means a " revenue village ". It is fundamentally a unit of area and all the people living on that area are shown as the " population " of the village concerned. But it often happens that a single revenue village is often divided into a number of hamlets or *Wadis* each of which is an independent " population centre ". Not infrequently, these hamlets or *Wadis* are separated by some miles so that the children from one cannot attend a school located in another. What an educationist needs, therefore, is the determination of the exact number of " population centres " and their distances from one another so that a programme of locating primary schools can be carefully planned with the object of avoiding all overlapping. As early as 1911, the Government of India had recommended that educational surveys of all the States should be carried out so as to enable the Education Department to provide a school for *every* village, however humble, at a minimum total cost. But no action had been taken on this recommendation. Ramabhau, therefore, decided to carry out a sample survey of the Ratnagiri District with the main object of demonstrating the utility of the concept. Assisted by the generous donation of Rs. 1,000 which was given by Shri Motiram Narayanrao Desai, the Local Self-Government Institute, Bombay, took up the cause and under its auspices, Ramabhau carried out the survey of Rajapur Taluka with the help of two local colleagues—Shri D. J. Kulkarni and D. J. Sardeshpande of the Rajapur High School. The Report of this survey, which was soon published by the Institute,

attracted considerable notice and the Government of Bombay was induced to sanction funds for the survey of the District as a whole. Ramabhau was associated with this work as Honorary Director and his two old colleagues helped him in this task also. The trio laboured at this project for about six months (1947-48) and prepared a voluminous report in Marathi which gives all details of the 1,345 villages of the District which are divided into 9,017 hamlets or *Wadis*. It has since been published in a summary form by Government (1950) and its main result was to set up a regular chain of similar surveys. The Government of Bombay kept up the idea and carried out the surveys of six other Districts, but for some unexplained reason, the work was halted before the entire State could be surveyed. The pioneer service which Ramabhau did to this cause cannot, however, be ignored. He revived a very useful idea and developed it to such an extent that it could even attract the attention of the Government of India and find a place for itself in the Second Five-Year Plan. It may be recalled that this plan provides Rs. 25 lakhs for an educational survey of the whole of India.

14. **Director of the Indian Institute of Education (1948-56):** In June 1948 still another phase began in Ramabhau's life with the founding of the *INDIAN INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION*. The establishment of this organisation was made possible because of the valuable co-operation of the late Shri G. V. Mavlankar who became its President, Smt. Hansa Mehta and Shri Dinkarrao N. Desai who became its Vice-Presidents, Shri M. T. Vyas who became the Chairman and Shri S. S. Naik and C. D. Barfivala of the Local Self-Government Institute who helped it in every way they could. Ramabhau has been its Director since 1948 and it is his inspiration and guidance that has enabled the Institute to make a remarkable contribution to education in the fields of teaching, research, publications, and educational experimentation. From 1948 to 1954, it conducted classes for the M.Ed. degree by papers and trained about 350 students, some of whom have distinguished themselves in academic fields and have since come to hold important posts in the Department, universities and other educational institutions. In the field of educational research, the Institute has also made an equally important contribution. From 1948 to 1956, it admitted about 75 students to the M.Ed. (by research) and Ph.D. Courses. Of these, a total of 16 students completed approved research work and obtained degrees—7 obtaining the M.Ed. degree and 9 the Ph.D. degree in education. Besides, as many as 132 students worked on some educational problems for their dissertation. They all obtained a training in research methods and some of them even made a humble contribution of their own to the thought or available data on some problem. The Institute has also published a number of useful books and research monographs and it even conducted a research journal for about three years. Finally, the experimental work of the Institute led to the founding of

Shri Mouni Vidya Peeth which has since grown into a Rural Institute and is one of the ten institutions selected for the purpose by the Government of India in the country as a whole.

It is of course true that these great achievements were a co-operative enterprise of Ramabhau and all his colleagues. But it must be pointed out that his personal contribution to the achievement of these results was indeed very considerable and it is all the more necessary to do so because Ramabhau himself is always belittling his own achievements at the Institute. He regularly lectured to the M.Ed. Students on history, administration and philosophy of education. It is no exaggeration to say that his were some of the most popular lectures at the Institute. While their clarity and scholarship were unchallenged and greatly appreciated, what really distinguished them and endeared them to the students was their superabundance of humour. No subject can be too dry for Ramabhau who always sends his class into roars of laughter irrespective of the topic he might be speaking on. In the field of research, it may be said that a large number of students have worked under Ramabhau's guidance and got the M.Ed. or Ph.D. degrees. In a research paper, Dr. V. V. Kamat has pointed out that, out of a total of 64 theses accepted so far by the University of Bombay, as many as 14 were prepared under Ramabhau.* These cover a variety of subjects; but as is quite natural the theses on problems dealing with history—the chief interest of Ramabhau in educational research—are more numerous than any other. In respect of publications, Ramabhau's great achievement during this period was to revive and develop the Narayanrao Topiwala Memorial Educational Research Series. This was possible partly because of the financial assistance given by Shri Motiram Desai and the Governments of India and Bombay, and partly because of the excellent co-operation he received from Shri C. L. Bakshi. The volume of old records which he had brought out at Kolhapur was again reprinted; † three further volumes were published; and one more is under preparation.‡ In short, it may be said that a considerable part of the work turned out by the Institute was a personal contribution of Ramabhau, to say nothing of the high status which his very presence as Director conferred upon that organisation.

Side by side with the Indian Institute of Education, another educational institution in Bombay also claimed the first rank in Ramabhau's affections. This was the *Bal Mohan Vidya Mandir* founded by Shri S. D. Rege (known as "Dada" to all his pupils, friends and

* For a list of these, see *Appendix I*. It must be pointed out that some of them belonged to the S.M.T.T. College, Kolhapur, and the S.T. College, Bombay, with which institutions also Ramabhau was associated as a research professor.

† As only 250 copies had been printed in 1945, the book was entirely out of stock by 1949.

‡ For details, see *Appendix II*.

admirers) in 1940. Dada is one of the ablest primary teachers and competent organisers that I have ever come across and the Bal Mohan Vidya Mandir which has now grown into a big school that conducts pre-primary, primary and secondary departments and enrols about 2,500 pupils bears eloquent tribute to the capacity of this man of humble academic attainments and humbler financial resources. Ramabhau was attracted to this institution partly because of his love and respect for Dada and partly because Dada's father had been a teacher of his at the primary stage. He had declared the school open in 1940 when he was Secretary of the Schools Committee; but he had not been able to keep in close touch with it when he was at Poona and Kolhapur. On his return to Bombay in 1946, however, he accepted the post of the Honorary Educational Adviser of the school and made it his official headquarters. Ramabhau's paternal guidance combined with the zeal and capacity of Dada has developed the school into one of the best educational institutions of its type in the City of Bombay and recently, it has even been able to construct a building for itself at a cost of more than five lakhs of rupees.

With the Indian Institute of Education and the Bal Mohan Vidya Mandir to lean on—Ramabhau calls them the two affectionate nurses of his old age—life in Bombay became comparatively easier. In the early years of this period, Ramabhau was still extremely hard-pressed for funds partly because the cost of living had increased greatly and partly because his children were receiving education at the collegiate stage. Towards the end of the period, however, he was able to settle down more comfortably than in the earlier period. Even before he came to Bombay in 1946, his eldest son had already been married and well settled in Bombay. During this period, his second son who had been married a little earlier also settled down to his own life. His third son completed his education at the medical college, got married, and started practising on his own. His fourth son developed a printing business for which he has a special aptitude and the fifth entered the automobile industry. His youngest son also completed his education and obtained a job in Government service. The elder of his two daughters was suitably married and the younger, who was trained as a primary teacher, began to follow a useful career in the teaching profession. The son of his brother, M. V. alias Baburao Parulekar (now the Headmaster of the Topiwala High School), who had also been educated by Ramabhau, completed his preparation for the profession of a Chartered Accountant and, by the end of the period under review, settled down in a well-established firm of good reputation. Ramabhau's great family difficulty was that all but two of his children were very young at the time of his retirement and he had to provide for their costly education at the secondary and collegiate stage when his own income was both meagre and uncertain. He had to face this ordeal for about

fifeen years. But the dark period did come to an end at last and, as all is well that ends well, Ramabhau can now look forward to a life of comparative ease and to freedom from financial worries which had beset him almost continuously since 1941.

15. **Other Activities (1948-56):** It should not be thought, however, that his work at the Institute and at the Bal Mohan Vidya Mandir could keep Ramabhau fully occupied. In spite of his years, he had still such superabundance of energy that he could attend to a number of other activities as well. By now, his reputation as an educationist was well-established not only in Bombay State but in the whole of India. Several calls were, therefore, made upon him and it must be said to his credit that he accepted many of them and carried out his responsibilities with an earnestness and efficiency which is but rarely equalled.

A few of the numerous engagements that he thus fulfilled during this period may be mentioned here. He was often invited to lecture to the M.Ed. students by the Universities of Baroda, Poona and Karnatak and almost every year, he was invited to be an examiner by a number of Universities. The Government of Bombay appointed him as a member of the *Provincial Board of Secondary Education* and that body later on elected him as Chairman and this election made him an *ex-officio* member of the *STATE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION* of the Bombay State. This consisted of the Chairmen of all the Provincial Boards of Education and the Education Minister himself was its President. It was here that Ramabhau mooted out a suggestion that the State should organise a research section as a part of the Education Department. A Committee to work out the scheme was also appointed but it never met and for some inexplicable reason, the whole project seemed to have fizzled out. It is extremely gratifying to note, however, that a Research Bureau has recently been set up in the office of the Director of Education at Poona. A project of still greater significance was his association with the *MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA*. He was a Visiting Professor at the University and, as already stated, used to lecture to the students on the history and administration of education. For a time, he was a member of the Board of Studies in Education and also of the Senate. It may even be said that, next to Bombay, Ramabhau was most closely associated with this University and that he made a significant contribution to the development of its Faculty of Education and Psychology.* As the Director of the Indian Institute of Education, he has recently become an *ex-officio* member of the Senate, Academic Council, and Board of Studies in Teaching of

* It would not be out of place to state here that Ramabhau was a member of the University Committee appointed to report on the affiliation of the Secondary Teachers' College, Baroda (out of which the present Faculty has been evolved) in 1934 and that its affiliation to the university was largely due to his warm support and strenuous efforts. Ramabhau performed a similar service for the S.M.T.T College, Kolhapur, also.

the *University of Bombay*. From 1951 to 1954, he was nominated as a member of the *S.S.C. Examination Board, Poona*. Here also, he put forward a proposal that a research section should be organised under the Board. This was accepted both by the Board and by the Government of Bombay and a research officer has since been working on some examination problems.

16. **The City Social Education Committee of Bombay:** Another institution with which Ramabhau was very closely associated during this period was the *CITY SOCIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF BOMBAY*. With his keen interest in the problem of literacy, it is hardly a matter of surprise if he should be intimately and effectively associated with the literacy movement in the State. As stated earlier, Ramabhau was a member of the Adult Education Committee of 1937. He was also associated with the literacy campaign which the Social Service League organised in Bombay City in 1939 and was appointed a member of the Bombay City Adult Education (now called Social Education) Committee right from its start. This association has continued unbroken and for some years past, Ramabhau has also been elected as one of its Vice-Presidents. As in other spheres, this position gave Ramabhau an opportunity to promote the spirit of enquiry and he tried to organise research in the field of adult literacy also. As a personal contribution to the problem, he tried to correlate the literacy and census statistics of the decade 1931-41, just as he had correlated them for the decade 1921-31 in his book, *Literacy in India*. This paper * is a little inconclusive but it does throw valuable light on the contribution of the voluntary schools and adult classes. Moreover, it was also at his instance that the Committee has undertaken some research work in adult literacy and a new tradition is now growing up in the field, slowly but steadily. In appreciation of his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee as well as of his close study of the problem, Ramabhau was elected President of the *All-India Adult Education Conference* held at Patna in 1954. His address on this occasion † sums up his usual ideas on the subject very pointedly and shows the need and significances of (1) emphasizing the early liquidation of illiteracy, (2) the organisation of a research unit, (3) the dangers inherent in a hasty expansion programme based on compulsion, and (4) the importance of evolving more scientific techniques of teaching adults. One may feel that it is a little too conservative; but there can be no difference of opinion on the sincerity and zest which underlie his entire approach.

17. **The Committee on Elementary Education in Madras (1953):** A still greater distinction came when an invitation was extended to him by the Government of Madras at the instance of Shri C. Rajagopalachari

* *See* pp. 246-57.
† *See* pp. 258-68.

who was then its Chief Minister, to be the Chairman of a Committee appointed to examine his new scheme of elementary education. Ever since 1937, the supporters of Basic Education had opposed the introduction of the shift system and the adoption of shorter school hours at the primary stage. The general opinion, therefore, was that the country had to choose between two mutually exclusive alternatives—Basic Education or the shift system. Somehow, Shri Rajagopalachari had thought intensively about the problem and had come to the conclusion that the shift system and Basic Education were not incompatible and that it is really possible to combine the financial advantages of the shift system with the educational advantages of Basic Education. When he was the Governor-General of India, he first gave public utterance to these views at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay; but they did not attract adequate notice. When, however, he became the Chief Minister of Madras a little later, he decided to put them in actual practice on a State-wide scale. The decision was fundamentally sound; but it was probably a little too hasty and unfortunately, several political considerations conspired together to rouse a violent opposition to it. It was, therefore, felt desirable to refer the whole matter to a Committee of Experts for examination. Ramabhau was invited to be the Chairman of the Committee and its unanimous Report is a document of great historical significance to Indian education. It marks one step forward in the further evolution of Ramabhau's ideas and reconciles the conflicting demands of the shift system and Basic Education by reducing formal instruction to three hours a day and by organising an out-of-school programme of suitable activities to make up for this deficiency.*

18. **Text-Books:** Another educational but minor activity of Ramabhau during this period was the preparation of some text-books. Prior to 1941, his only venture in the field was to prepare, in collaboration with another officer, a series of *Safety Education* books for Bombay's children. But he had no financial interest in them. After his retirement, however, he took up the task in right earnest and is now known as the author of some good text-books in Geography and Arithmetic. His first books on Geography were prepared in collaboration with Shri A. N. Sane and Shri Bhansaheb Ajgaonkar. On the death of the latter, Shri Modak of Poona was admitted as an additional colleague. His work on Arithmetic, however, has been published recently and has been done in collaboration with Shri Dada Rege. Still more recently, he has also collaborated with Kumari Reuben in preparing a text-book in English. It is true that the main object of those who write text-books is to earn money. Ramabhau is no exception to this rule, but I do believe that it is a distinct service to education to write a good text-book.

---

* The Report of the Committee has been officially published by the Government of Madras.

Ramabhau's books on Geography are so popular and have been so widely used that they ought to be looked upon as a service to education although its significance might not be very great.

19. **Ramabhau the Man:** The foregoing review of the main events of Ramabhau's life and his principal writings may be taken as a fairly comprehensive introduction to Ramabhau the educationist. To those who know him only from his writings, Ramabhau the educationist is all that matters. But the more fortunate few who have come in close personal contact with him will readily agree that Ramabhau the man is an extremely lovable person in himself and that he would have been remembered, loved and admired as a great teacher and a good friend even if he had not written a single line nor put forward a single theory.

I was first introduced to Ramabhau through his books when I came across his *Mass Education in India* and *Literacy in India*. At that time, I was working in villages and was trying to grapple with several problems of rural primary education. Both these books gave me a new vision and helped me to understand my problems and to work out some tentative solutions for them. But captivated as I greatly was with these brilliant documents, I had never looked forward to the happiness of meeting him in person and if any astrologer or palmist had then told me that I would become his friend one day, I would have ridiculed the suggestion as fantastic. But life has not yet lost its capacity to work out miracles; and I met Ramabhau in 1940 at the house of Shri S. R. Tawade who was then Educational Inspector at Dharwar. I had also the good fortune, as stated already, to work as his colleague on the Provincial Board of Primary Education. In a very short time, our relations developed from a mere acquaintance into friendship and from friendship into camaraderie in a common cause. I feel very proud of the fact that I have been his colleague for more than a quarter century, have shared all his ideas on mass education, and have even been able to work them out in some greater detail. Our association has indeed been so close that I have almost became a member of his family and from this vantage point, I have gradually been able to realise some of the great qualities of Ramabhau the man—his simplicity of life, his unbounded affection for every underdog on earth, his extreme kindliness, his capacity to forget personal insults or even injuries, his aversion for scenes or quarrels, his inexhaustible capacity for continuous and intensive intellectual work, his unbending devotion to the one ideal of his life—the spread of mass education in India, and his innate sense of humour which has enabled him to triumph over all the manifold adversities of his life.

I wish I had the space to describe Ramabhau the man in detail. I could then narrate many an incident in his life to illustrate what I have said above and try to paint the portrait of a life which can be a good example for any teacher to follow. But in this book which is

mainly concerned with Ramabhau's contribution to educational thought, such personal biography is a little out of place and I will have to reserve it for another occasion. But even in this brief review, I cannot help describing the two outstanding qualities of life that have attracted me most in Ramabhau. The first is his spirit of moderation and compromise. Whether in speech or in writing, Ramabhau will never go to extremes. His praise as well as his condemnation is always so balanced that it never hurts anyone. When he differs from others, he does it with inimitable grace and humility. He is always striving to understand differing viewpoints and to work out a compromise formula that would be acceptable to all concerned. The mere presence of Ramabhau on a committee is regarded as a guarantee of some unanimous decision and I can recall several instances where this unique capacity of his proved almost providential. When a violent controversy crops up, Ramabhau generally sits listening with his eyes shut—a common habit of his which has led to many a comic misunderstanding on several occasions—and refuses to be drawn into it on any provocation. But not a word or phrase ever escapes him and he keeps on thinking about it till everyone has almost exhausted himself with arguments. Then Ramabhau suddenly breaks his silence, sums up the debate, compliments each side on their good points, and slowly unfolds a new formula in which each side gains something. Generally, he combines his proposal with some good joke or the other so that everyone laughs and accepts the compromise and a round of tea helps to clear the atmosphere till another fight starts over the next item on the agenda. Ramabhau has thus saved many a meeting or committee which would otherwise have ended quite differently.

The second most lovable quality of Ramabhau is his irrepressible sense of humour. To be in the company of Ramabhau is to laugh almost continuously over one thing or the other and I am almost tempted to say that a person who has felt his comfort long would even forget to weep. Moreover, what has impressed me most is not the capacity of Ramabhau to make the company laugh—many a heartless wit or brainless joker can do that—but his genius for making everybody laugh without hurting anyone. Lucas said that the best humourist is one whose jokes are reported by those against whom they are cut. This is entirely applicable to Ramabhau who would never hurt anyone for the pleasure of raising a laugh. Most of his jokes are impersonal and everyone can share them. But when he must laugh at a person, he generally selects himself as the target. I have yet to come across a person who enjoys jokes against himself to such an extent. When Ramabhau gets into an autobiographical mood—this often happens after a good meal (Ramabhau loves good meals, especially those containing rice, fish, curds and mangoes)—he regales his friends with an endless series of personal anecdotes in which he laughs against himself. For instance, he would describe his early marriage and how he agreed to it because his grand-

mother told him that he would never get another bride; how his father was extremely anxious to see a grandson but how the old man died disappointed; how he attempted to number his children, how it created a dilemma when twins were born, and how he got out of it by calling them Nos. 5(*a*) and 5(*b*); how it was then a sacrilege for a Headmaster to meet his European Inspector in 'native' clothes and how he was once compelled to borrow somebody else's European clothes and practise walking with ill-fitting boots when the Educational Inspector was to visit his school; how miserable he felt because he had to forego, on account of a silly traditional custom, all the excellent chicken served on board the steamer that took him to England; how he contrived to get a fish to eat when he was in Italy and could only communicate with the waiter by placing his finger on a suitable word in the Anglo-Italian dictionary he had purchased for himself; how he tried in vain to give up smoking—the solitary vice of his life; how he tried to live on borrowed cigarettes—he calls them O.P. or 'Other People's Brand'—until his friends threatened to give up smoking altogether; and so on. I had often heard it said that laughter is man's best defence against personal adversity and that the capacity to laugh at oneself is a good guarantee for the proper development of one's personality; but I had never realised its significance till I met Ramabhau. I think that there can be no better proof for these doctrines than the life of Ramabhau himself.

20. **Ramabhau's contribution to Educational Thought:** The charming personality of Ramabhau is known only to the circle of his friends and its memory will pass out with them. But his educational ideology is known to thousands of teachers and administrators who do not or even cannot know him personally and it has obtained a permanent place for itself in the history of Indian Education. This brief biographical account may, therefore, be fittingly closed with an evaluation of his contribution to educational thought—a contribution which, I am sure, will be remembered long after he and all of us have ceased to be.

Historically, Ramabhau stands in direct succession to Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the great champion of the cause of mass education. Gokhale would yield to none in his desire for the early introduction of universal, compulsory and free primary education and for that purpose, was willingly prepared to sacrifice quality. "The primary purpose of mass education," he said, "is to banish illiteracy from the land; the quality of education is a matter of importance that comes only after illiteracy has been banished." Ramabhau is convinced that this is the only correct approach to the problem in a poor country like India and he has consequently stuck to it for all these years. It must be noted, however, that he does not merely repeat the words of Gokhale, his *guru*. He has actually carried the torch a step further and worked out a feasible scheme for the realisation of Gokhale's ideal. That this

scheme was not universally accepted by contemporary administrators is everybody's misfortune. But the very fact that it is gradually finding a larger area of acceptance is a proof of its truth and vitality. To have discovered this practicable method of achieving expansion in spite of the slender financial resources available and to have held up Gokhale's ideals before the people for upwards of two decades is the great contribution of Ramabhau to the educational thought of India. His other contributions are comparatively of lesser significance but are quite important in themselves. Among them may be mentioned the publication of the old educational records of the Bombay Secretariat, stimulation of educational research, encouragement of private educational enterprise, and the pioneer development of studies in educational administration. When all his contributions are put together, I feel no hesitation in saying that he is one of the great educationists that Maharashtra has produced during the last fifty years. May he be blessed with a long and peaceful life and be spared to perform still greater services to the cause of education in days to come!

Gargoti,
18th June 1956

J. P. NAIK

THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

To the early educators of Bombay, the question of the medium of instruction was a simple one. Their object was pure and simple—the improvement of the moral and material condition of the people. Granted that the people had a language of their own and that they had an initial stock of learning, imperfect though it be, it naturally followed that the proper measure of diffusing further knowledge among them was to impart it through the medium of their own language. The conclusion was so irresistible that it was accepted both by Government and by the private educational agencies as the soundest principle of guidance in the education of the people.

The Bombay Education Society wrote in 1821 :

"In imparting to the Natives useful knowledge to any extent, and with the hope of any good and permanent effect, it is evident the language of the country must be the chief and proper vehicle . . . it is impossible to look, with any hopes of success, to imparting knowledge generally and usefully in a language (i.e. English) which must remain to the greater portion a foreign one." [1]

The Bombay Native Education Society declared its opinion in more emphatic terms :

"For it appears to the Society that the moral and intellectual culture of the Native mind is most successfully effected by employing the Native languages, as the medium of communication. It must indeed be obvious that the previous acquisition, by the Natives, of a sufficient knowledge of English for this purpose, must require a time which would be much more beneficially employed in enlarging and improving their minds. Little, if any, advantage of this kind can be derived from the course of reading prescribed to them during the four or five years (or even more) which would be necessary for their learning English at all accurately ; and when their attention would be occupied by the efforts requisite for retaining the remembrance of the words of a language which differs so much from their mother tongue, both in idiom and construction. . . ." [2]

It was the chief characteristic of the early educators in Bombay that they were not one-sided in their policy. They were fully conscious of the importance of English language in connection with their object in view. The Bombay Native Education Society added to what it wrote above :

1. Sixth Annual Report of the Bombay Education Society (1821), p. 21.
2. The Third Report of the B.N.E. Society (1825-26), p. 22.

"Hence it will be observed that the Society considers the teaching of the English language as of secondary importance in effecting the mental and moral improvement of the natives. It is desirable, however, to render those few scholars, who evince an inclination and have leisure to continue their studies in English language, capable of understanding all kinds of English works on literature and Science; to the attainment of this object, the genius and ability of native boys present no obstacle, and the exertions of the Society shall not be wanting. But as such works abound in ideas with which the natives are totally unacquainted, these ideas will be most easily rendered comprehensible to them by means of the mother tongue of each scholar." [3]

This view of creating a body of teachers and writers from amongst the people themselves by acquainting them with the English language, was at the root of all efforts of the early educators in promoting 'English' Education. The knowledge of English was to be a means to an end—which was the education of the people through the Vernaculars. We have already seen that in his Minute on Education, Elphinstone wrote of the proposed English Schools in the same spirit. Again in their reply to the Bombay Education Society on above-mentioned view of the medium of instruction, the Government informed the Society :

"The Honourable the Governor in Council considers the arguments you have stated, conclusive against depending on English Schools alone for imparting instruction to the Natives; but if a certain number of natives can be prevailed on to devote themselves to the acquisition of European knowledge, through the English language, it is to be hoped that by translations and other works, they would greatly contribute, through the medium of their own language, to the progress of their countrymen, supposing the latter have been properly prepared by previous instruction." [4]

We have already seen that in his views about the comparative importance of English and the Vernacular in the education of the people, Elphinstone was opposed by Mr. Warden, a member of the Governor's Council. It is, therefore, proper to examine Mr. Warden's views more closely and to see how far they were really sound. Mr. Warden wrote :

"No doubt the progress of knowledge can be most effectually and economically promoted by a study of the English language, where in every branch of Science, we have, ready compiled, the most useful works which cannot be compressed in tracts or translated in the Native languages without great expense and the labour of years." [5]

---

3. The Third Annual Report of the B.N.E. Society (1825-26), p. 23.
4. ibid., p. 24.
5. Quoted by Syed Mahmood: *A History of English Education in India (1895)*, p. 41.

In judging the merit of Mr. Warden's opposition we should note that he does not maintain that the knowledge of Science contained in the English books could not be conveyed through the medium of the Vernacular ; but that he objects to the 'great expense' involved therein and further he shows the difficulty of time and labour—'labour of years'. Now it will be granted that any scheme of 'national' improvement worked through 'quick and inexpensive' measures is sure to result in failure, if not in 'national' disaster. Success in such an undertaking is only possible if the present is made altogether subservient to the future ; and time, labour and expense are ungrudgingly given for its accomplishment.

We thus see that Mr. Warden's opposition did not, in the least, lessen the force and wisdom of the views held by Elphinstone and those who sided with him.

Not only did Government and the B.N.E. Society hold these liberal views in the educational policy of the time, but even the Indian public was inspired by the same motives when it subscribed a large sum for the 'Elphinstone Professorships' in 1827. As these 'Professorships' were meant for instructing the Indian youth in the Arts and Sciences of Europe, it is sometimes alleged that the Indian public wanted[6] 'English' education in preference to 'Vernacular' education. Let us, therefore, see what the subscribers to the fund had to say in the matter. At the time of handing over the fund to the B.N.E. Society the leaders of the Indian community informed the Society :

"Your Society will be pleased to bear in mind, what the Natives have desired us particularly to express, that, by the study of the English language, they do not contemplate the supercession of the Vernacular dialects of the country, in the promotion of Native Education ; but that they regard it merely as a help to the diffusion of the European Arts and Sciences among them, by means of translations by those who have acquired a thorough acquaintance with it ; and as a branch of classical education to be esteemed and cultivated in this country as the classical languages of Greece and Rome are in the Universities of Europe."[7]

Sir John Malcolm who succeeded Elphinstone as the Governor of Bombay looked upon the establishment of the Professorships in the

6. F. W. Thomas: *The History and Prospects of British Education in India*, p. 48.
7. Fourth Report of the B.N.E. Society for 1827, p. 81.

Note.—Jagannath Shankershet, one of the most prominent Indians of his time and a member of the Board of Education, Bombay, wrote in a Minute dated 1st May (1847) in the controversy between Anglicists *versus* Vernacularists the following:

'I must also observe that when the native chiefs and others gave large subscriptions for the establishment of the Elphinstone Professorships they contributed them with an understanding that the Vernacular languages were not to be neglected, but carefully fostered and improved, and brought into use as the medium of communicating useful knowledge to the great body of the people.'

Selections from Educational Records, Part II (1840-1859), by J. A. Richey (1922), p. 17.

same light. These professors he thought would 'teach the few who were to teach the many', and through them 'the Natives of this quarter of India (Western India) will be able to obtain that information and knowledge which is best suited to their wishes, their talents and their various occupations in life'.[8] In fact in these words Malcolm announced his intention of giving a truly 'national' education to the people; and it is but natural that in his opinion only the Vernaculars could be the chief media of the diffusion of such a knowledge among the people. Looking forward, with great hopefulness, to the establishment of these 'Professorships', he wrote:

"To the Natives so educated, I look for aid, in the diffusion of knowledge among their countrymen, through the medium of their Vernacular dialects; and I certainly think that it is only by knowledge being accessible through the latter medium, that it ever can be propagated to any general or beneficial purpose."[9]

Later on he spoke very significant words on the same subject to a mixed audience of Europeans and Indians:

"Let those present recollect the days of their boyhood; until the age of 12 or 14 the time was spent in acquiring their own language in reading, writing and arithmetic. Suppose after this preparation, that instead of being able to acquire knowledge in English works, they were told these treasures were hidden in Greek and Hebrew books, they would have shrunk from the task in despair; for, years must elapse before they learnt the new language, and that period of life, which to be useful should be passed in the application of knowledge, would be spent in its attainment, and if they did persevere, their acquirements would in a great measure separate them from the Community to which they belonged; they would be veiled from common view in a language unspoken and not understood by their relations and friends; and they would be unable to impart what they knew, to any who had not gone through the same process as themselves. These results . . . could only be avoided by changing the languages of the Natives of India, and this was wholly impracticable. If knowledge was to be imparted, there was only one mode of doing it, and that was through the medium of their own language, and to effect this, it was indispensible to associate in the labour the principal Natives of the country where the attempt was made. Both these objects have been accomplished at Bombay."[10]

We have so far confined ourselves to the views of the early educators of Bombay. Let us now see how and to what extent these views were put into practice. "We have seen that under the guidance of

8. Syed Mahmood: *A History of English Education in India*, p. 43.
9. ibid., p. 43.
10. Fourth Report of the B.N.E. Society for 1827, pp. 11-12.

Elphinstone, Government offered very liberal rewards for translations of English treatises into Vernaculars. In response to this invitation several gentlemen came forward with books of various degrees of usefulness. Owing to the accurate nature of the subject and consequent facility of translation, attention was first drawn to the mathematical books; and within a few years, there were produced books on almost all important branches of that Science used in the instruction of youths. Books were printed on Algebra, Higher Arithmetic, Geometry, Trigonometry, Mensuration of heights and distances, tables of logarithmic sines and tangents, etc. There were books on the histories of England and India, Geography, histories of Egypt, Greece, Rome and other ancient countries, Astronomy and Natural Philosophy." [11]

In order to facilitate the work of translation the Bombay Education Society published a long list of about 120 English books 'for translation, to be procured on loan from the Society's library'.[11] Under the joint auspices of the Government and the Society the work of translation was carried on with an enthusiasm and determination that can scarcely be equalled. In 1827, the Society was able to announce :

"It is not long since an opinion was very general of the hopelessness of rendering English works of Science intelligible to the Natives of this country through medium of translations into the Vernacular dialects . . . the genius of the Marathi and Gujarati languages aided by their cognate, the Sanskrit, admits of versions perfectly adapted to the conveyance of instruction. . . ." [12]

But this is not all ; the most important work which made this early period of the history of Education in Bombay a unique one in the history of Education of India, was that a successful attempt was made in imparting instruction through the Vernacular in the practical Sciences of Medicine and Engineering.

Referring to the Engineers' Institute which was established in Bombay in 1824, Malcolm wrote :

"I have since my arrival paid much attention to the institution for educating natives in the Engineering and revenue branch and regret that my sentiments regarding its progress and utility should differ so much from those of Mr. Warden and particularly on the essential point of the language." [13]

Malcolm found that the easiest way to attract Indian pupils to such institutions where new and practical Sciences were taught was to make the instruction available in the Vernacular. He wrote : "But when

11. Appendix to the Third Report of the B.N.E. Society for 1825-26, pp. 31-33.
12. Fourth Report of the B.N.E. Society for 1827, p. 28-29.
13. Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company, I. Public, 1931-32, p. 525.

they find the means presented to them, as they now are, of acquiring Science through the medium of the Native languages, the great obstacle is overcome. They enter at once upon the study of the Science they desire to attain, and from being able to read and write the language in which it is made accessible, their progress is quite surprising." [14]

As regards the quality and benefit of the instruction given in the institution, through the Vernacular, he wrote :

"The pupils at this institution are instructed in . . . algebra, in mathematics, in plane and perspective drawing, in architecture and mechanics ; and I am confident from what I have seen, that besides the advantage the public will derive from their attainments, natives of rank will eagerly employ their scientific countrymen in surveying their estates, and building houses and bridges, and that the profits and consideration derived from such employ, will stimulate others to exertion, and spread abroad, without aid from Government, both the desire and the means of acquiring Science." [15]

Another attempt of a similar nature was being tried through the 'Native Medical Institution' which was opened in 1826 or thereabouts 'to introduce a knowledge of medicine among our native subjects according to European principles'.[16] In 1829 the Governor was able to report [16] that 15 medical treatises were lithographed and that another 15 were shortly to be printed 'for supplying a library of European Medical Science' in their own languages.

The teachers in charge of these two institutions were 'masters of the Vernaculars' and each had been able to convey the instruction through the Vernacular to the satisfaction [17] of Government. By their indefatigable energy they were able to lay a solid foundation for the use of the future generation of teachers and students by preparing Vernacular books in their respective branches of instruction.

Thus the cause of the Vernaculars as the media of instruction for 'European Arts and Sciences' was vigorously championed, both in theory and practice, by Elphinstone and Malcolm. The personalities of both these Governors were so powerful and the services rendered by them to the East India Company were so great that in spite of the usual unwillingness for liberal expenses for any cause that did not bring directly an addition to their treasury, the Directors in England allowed them a free hand in their measures, both as regards policy and expenditure. It is surprising to find that within the five years (1826-30) Government expended about Rs. 200,000 or about Rs. 40,000 a year 'for the

14. ibid., p. 526.
15. Report from the Select Committee, etc., p. 526.
16. ibid., p. 537.
17. Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781-1839), by H. Sharp, p. 197.

publication of works and other allied purposes'. It appears that in sanctioning expenses the Directors looked to the persons asking for the expenses rather than to the usefulness or otherwise of their proposals.

Malcolm left India in 1830 and the succeeding Governors, though they were the supporters of their predecessors in their policy of 'Vernacular Education', were not very enthusiastic about it. They soon yielded to financial considerations which, they knew, were dearer to their masters in England than the Education of the people of India. The two institutions—the Engineering and the Medical—to which reference has been made above, were soon given up and their very existence has passed into utter oblivion. Indian Educators of today are wrangling over the question--whether higher branches of knowledge could be taught in the Vernaculars. Had these two institutions been allowed a free growth, they would have at least served the useful purpose of supplying a satisfactory answer, either affirmative or negative.

The books that were translated in the short space of five years were not printed in vain. In the various 'district' Vernacular Schools throughout the Presidency they were used by the teachers in instructing the pupils. Often they were read by others—laymen—who had a thirst for knowledge. The grip of this brief addition to the educative value of the Vernaculars was so great over the schoolmasters of the time that for many years afterwards the Vernacular Schools taught such subjects as are, today, quite beyond the dream of the Vernacular Teachers.

But in spite of the sudden stopping of the liberal grant for translations, the Bombay Government had not changed its general policy of 'Vernacular' education. The Governors who succeeded Elphinstone and Malcolm remained faithful to their policy in spirit though not in financial support.

The following extract from a Bengal Missionary paper of 1837 clearly points out that Bombay was shaping at the time an educational policy of her own quite independent of what was being done at Calcutta, the Seat of the Imperial Government, where, in 1835, Macaulay's famous Minute had given a different turning to the education of Bengal :

"We have since been favoured with copies of the reports of the Bombay (Native) Education Society, and are most happy to find, that the attention of that body has been directed from its institution in 1822 to the instruction of the Natives in their own tongue, to the preparation of Native Schoolmasters, and the translation and printing of a body of works in the language of the country. . . . The General Committee of Public Instruction at this Presidency (Bengal) declare in their report that Vernacular Education is the ultimate object of all their labours, but

years pass by after years, without any attempt whatsoever to bring us any nearer to its accomplishment. Hence we have no means of ascertaining the object of the Committee but from their respective promises. At Bombay, on the contrary, we discover the object of those engaged in the task of education from the vigorous efforts which are made. The Bombay Society patronise to the full extent of its importance the diffusion of English ; but this is a secondary object with them. . . .

"The number of valuable works published by the Society in the Native languages on some of the most abstruse subjects, fully demonstrates the fallacy of the notion that the Native languages are not at present fitted for the conveyance of knowledge. The Bombay Education Society have at once confronted the difficulties of translating European books into the languages of the country, and these difficulties, which appear so formidable at a distance, are found to disappear as they are approached with a resolute mind. We cannot but consider it a matter of congratulation for India generally, that the system of Vernacular Education has been so successfully pursued at that Presidency. A model is thus afforded to the other provinces of this empire, which it would be well for the Directors of Public Instruction in the Metropolis of British India to study with diligence, that they may benefit by that complete organisation of plan which has been so happily matured at that Presidency." [18]

Macaulay's Minute of 1835 and its bearing on Bombay Education

It is well known that the policy of Education in Bengal was fluctuating between what are usually called the 'Orientalists' and the 'Anglicists' till the famous Minute of Macaulay in 1835. Every book that deals with Indian Education devotes at least some space to that Minute about which Sir John Seely inscribed his astonishing verdict that 'never on this earth was a more momentous question discussed'. [19] For our purpose it is sufficient to note that the effect of Macaulay's Minute was twofold. Firstly, it was officially recognised that Western knowledge and Western culture were to receive the fostering care of Government in preference to 'Oriental' learning and culture ; and secondly, that the Western knowledge was to be imparted through the medium of English. Let us now see what was thought and done in Western India (Bombay) on these two important points. It is very significant to note that in Bombay the 'Orientalists' versus 'Anglicists' controversy never existed. The Poona Sanskrit College was established

18. *Friend of India* (Serampore), January 26th, 1837. See also for a similar appreciation (from Bengal), Colonel Sykes: *Statistics of Educational Institutions of the E.I. Company in India (1844?)*, p. 73. 'The Vernacular Schoolbooks in use in Bombay are the *objects of praise* by the Bengal Government. They consist of translations into Maratha, Gujrathi and Canarese, of treatises on algebra, geometry, trigonometry, grammar, history, natural philosophy, general knowledge and moral instruction.'
19. C. F. Andrews: *The Renaissance of India* p. 28.

in 1820; but from the very beginning the object of Government in opening the College was mainly political. It was openly admitted that many of the subjects taught there were 'worse than useless'. Further, one of its objects, from the very beginning, was declared to be the gradual introduction of Western knowledge. Even Elphinstone anticipated that in the course of time the European branch would swallow the Hindu one and the whole fund of the College would become applicable to the diffusion of useful science.[20] It is, therefore, clear that what Macaulay declared in 1835—a supersession of Western over the Oriental knowledge and culture—was already being practised under the patronage of the Government in Bombay. So far as this part of Macaulay's Minute is concerned Bombay had nothing to learn from it; and if that were the only significance—and we believe the momentous nature of the decision lies in that alone—of the Minute, we would have passed over it without interfering in the least with the continuity of the history of Bombay Education. But the other aspect of the Minute, viz. the question of Medium of Instruction for the diffusion of that knowledge and culture, the policy followed in Bombay differed entirely from that laid down by Macaulay. As the credit of originating the Bombay policy goes to Elphinstone, we shall try to see why he differed from Macaulay on this most important question of the medium of instruction, although he anticipated Macaulay by twelve years in his decision in favour of Western knowledge and culture. The reason for this difference could be found in the antecedents of both these men before they wrote their Minutes—Elphinstone in 1823 and Macaulay in 1835. Elphinstone had been actively engaged in the affairs of India since 1795; and from 1801 he was intimately connected with the Peshwa, of whose territories he became the Governor in 1819. A testimony to his very intimate knowledge of the people is supplied by the most able and exhaustive 'Report on the Territories Conquered from the Peshwa'[21] which he submitted to Government within a year of the conquest. He knew, even before he became Governor, that there were already 'Schools in all towns and in many villages'.[22]

"Books are scarce, and the common ones probably ill chosen; but there exist in the Hindu languages many tales and fables that would be generally read, and that would circulate sound morals. There must be religious books tending more directly to the same end."[23]

He knew that the Peshwa spent a vast sum in distributing gifts among learned Brahmins and thus indirectly helped the promotion of higher learning, and that there was an abundance of men capable of doing the work of teachers of their own people. Before he wrote his

20. Official Writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone, by G. W. Forrest, p. 91.
21. ibid., pp. 253ff.
22. ibid., p. 334.
23. ibid., p. 334.

Minute the Bombay Education Society had explored the methods and contents of teaching in the indigenous schools and had declared their opinion that what was wanted was the development and improvement of what already existed in the land. Armed with such knowledge about the people he was called upon to write his educational Minute.

Let us now turn to Macaulay and his claim to write his educational Minute. In Bengal, till the time of Macaulay's Minute, nothing was done to study the state of education of the province ; as to his knowledge about the people, their civilisation, their learning, the less said the better. He was in India scarcely for a year. To quote only one instance of his 'ludicrous ignorance of the value of Oriental Literature', he wrote in his Minute 'I have never found one among them (men distinguished by their proficiency of Eastern tongue) who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'.[24]

Elphinstone had an occasion to write on the same subject, but he looked at the problem differently. He wrote in connection with certain recommendations about the Poona Sanskrit College :

"At no time, however, could I wish that the purely Hindu part of the course should be totally abandoned. It would surely be a preposterous way of adding to the intellectual treasures of a nation to begin by the destruction of its indigenous literature ; and I cannot but think the future attainments of the Natives will be increased in extent as well as in variety by being as it were grafted on their own previous knowledge and imbued with their own original and peculiar character."[25]

In defending the addition of a Professor of Poetry to the staff of the College, he wrote :

"It is this part (poetry) which seems to have the most intrinsic merit. . . . It is this part also which it is both most practicable and most desirable to preserve. Even without the example and assistance of a more civilised nation, the Science possessed by every nation is gradually superseded by their own discoveries as they advance in knowledge and their early works fall into disuse and into oblivion. But it is otherwise with their poetry ; the standard works maintain their reputation undiminished in every age, they form the models of composition and the fountains of classical language ; and the writers of the rudest ages are those who contribute most to the delight and refinement of the most improved of their posterity."[26]

Elphinstone wrote these words twelve years before Macaulay's Minute.

---

24. Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781-1839), by H. Sharp, p. 109.
25. Official Writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone, by G. W. Forrest, p. 110.
26. ibid., p. 111.

We have tried to describe the antecedents of the two writers. If a thorough knowledge of the past and especially of the present are to be counted as an asset to a reformer of the future, we believe Elphinstone had a decided advantage over Macaulay.

The omission of even an encouragement of the Vernaculars, in Macaulay's Minute and in Lord William Bentinck's Resolution thereon, was the gravest fault of the new educational policy introduced in Bengal; and we understand that an attempt was made later on, both by the author of the Minute and the Committee of Public Instruction [27] to compensate for this sin of omission.

The Calcutta University Commission make enlightening remarks on this question which give us a fresh insight into the significance of the new legislation of 1835. 'The nature of the new principles introduced into Indian Education Policy in 1835 has been often misinterpreted. It was decided that Government must undertake a steady encouragement and expansion of Western Education; and as a sign of this the funds devoted to Educational purposes were greatly increased. It was decided, also, that the medium of instruction in higher work should be English, rather than the ancient learned tongues, Sanskrit and Arabic. But this did not mean that Government wished to discourage Oriental learning; still less did it mean that they intended to discourage the development of the Vernacular. The Eastern and Western schools were agreed that the Indian Vernaculars were not yet developed sufficiently to be used as the media of Western knowledge, and the only question between them was whether English or the classical languages should be used for this purpose. But the now victorious Western school always held that the Vernaculars ought to be improved and developed; they insisted that the Vernacular should be properly taught in the Schools; and they looked forward to the time when Western knowledge would be widely diffused through the Vernacular.' [28]

We are glad to understand that as far back as 1835 when the new Imperial Education Policy on Indian Education was shaped the authors of the policy 'looked forward to the time when Western knowledge would be widely diffused through Vernacular'. But did they adopt measures to realise the hope? For a reply to this question we refer to the extract from *Friend of India* already quoted.

Coming to the days of the Board of Education established in Bombay in 1840, we begin with an extract from Captain Candy's Report, wherein at the desire of Lord Aucland, the Governor-General of India, he expressed his opinion as to the respective claims of English

27. Report of the Calcutta University Commission (1919), Vol. II, p. 230.
28. Report of the Calcutta University Commission, 1919, Vol. I, pp. 35-36.

and of Vernacular in the system of Indian Education. Candy wrote in 1840 :

" It seems to me that too much encouragement cannot be given to the study of English, nor too much value put upon it, in its proper place and connection, in a plan for the intellectual and moral improvement of India. This place I conceive to be that of supplying ideas and the matter of instruction, not that of being the medium of instruction. The medium through which the mass of the population must be instructed, I humbly conceive must be their Vernacular tongues, and neither English nor Sanskrit. Sanskrit, I conceive, to be the grand store-house from which strength and beauty may be drawn for the Vernacular languages, and it is, therefore, highly deserving of cultivation, but it cannot furnish from its stores the matter of instruction, nor can it ever be the medium of instruction to more than a few. In a word, knowledge must be drawn from the stores of the English language, the Vernaculars must be employed as the media of communicating it, and Sanskrit must be largely used to improve the Vernaculars and make them suitable for the purpose. I look on every Native who possesses a good knowledge of his own mother tongue, of Sanskrit and of English, to possess the power of rendering incalculable benefit to his countrymen." [29]

Candy's report was duly submitted to the Governor-General. The absence of any opposition from the Imperial Government to what Candy wrote and to what Bombay was doing in the field of Education upto the time, proves that the decision of Macaulay was not taken as the last word on the subject. Upto 1841, the question was still an open one. The Court of Directors showed their unwillingness to pronounce the final acceptance of that decision ; for they wrote in 1841 :

" We forbear at present from expressing an opinion regarding the most efficient mode of communicating and disseminating European knowledge. Experience does not yet warrant the adoption of any exclusive system." [30]

It is not, therefore, surprising that Bombay was allowed complete freedom to carry on the work of education on her own line, opposed though it was to the spirit of the Educational Legislature of 1835.

But things were soon destined to change in Bombay. In 1844 Sir Erskine Perry became President of the Board of Education and in his nine years' regime he did for Bombay what Macaulay did for Bengal ten years before. Knowing the importance of the subject—Education—over which he was called to preside, Sir E. Perry endeavoured to make himself master 'of what had been done in Education both in Europe

---

29. Selections from Educational Records, Part II (1840-59), by J. A. Richey, p. 2.
30. ibid., p. 4.

and in India'. In the report of the Board of Education for 1845, he drew up a summary of Bombay Education from the days of Elphinstone down to his own time. And he discovered that the Bombay Policy was not in conformity with the policy of the Government of India (Bengal). After comparing the Educational statistics of Bengal and Bombay he pointed out that 'while the resources available for education in this Presidency (Bombay) have principally been directed to numbers and to vernacular instruction, the Bengal authorities have chiefly adapted their institutions to the reception of the smaller numbers who desired to acquire the English tongue'.[31] He gave a summary of the 'results' of Bombay Education and pointed out that the instruction given in Bombay Schools which were mainly vernacular was 'elementary' and that it was of no use for further improvement of the scholar, for there were no books that the scholars could read after leaving School.

"By dint of much perseverance a number of vernacular school books has been produced during the last twenty years, but when these elementary works have been perused, where is the vernacular scholar to get others wherewith to pursue the task of self-improvement?"[32]

In Sir E. Perry's opinion, therefore, these Schools failed in their chief object which was 'to make a permanent deep impression on the Asiatic mind, and . . . to fit it for the reception of the results of Western civilisation'.

To achieve this object he added 'they must be made perfectly familiar with the English tongue, in which alone they will be able to obtain that supply for their intellectual cravings which will be of any service to themselves or to others'.[33] Further he emphatically declared that in the education of the governed by the governing the language of the governing nation was the only effective medium by which superior knowledge could be conveyed. As to his bringing to his help the opinion of the Court of Directors we have already said enough.

The result of the attempts of Sir E. Perry was that the Board of Education came to the decision, hitherto unknown in Bombay, that the higher branches of education could only be taught effectively through the medium of English—a decision similar to that of Macaulay's in 1835.[33]

This new policy was very vehemently discussed by the Board of Education, and though it was adopted by a narrow majority in 1845, the minority, including all Indian members and some Europeans, differred entirely on this particular point. However, the President lost

31. Report of the Board of Education for 1845, p. 12.
32. ibid., p. 17.
33. ibid., p. 19.

no time in taking active measures to give effect to the Board's decision, and from that date a vigorous expansion of 'English' education was undertaken in Bombay.

But in the following year, an occasion arose for a fresh discussion on the subject among the members of the Board. A voluminous record of the discussion printed in the reports of the Board for 1847 to 1850 presents an interesting chapter in the history of Education in India concerning the all-important problem of the medium of instruction in the higher branches of knowledge.[34]

The occasion for the controversy was quite incidental. In 1844 an Engineering class was opened in connection with the Elphinstone Institution under a professor specially sent by the Court of Directors. The new professor, being unacquainted with the vernaculars of the pupils, was asked to impart the instruction in English and the class was formed from some of the advanced students of the English Department of the Elphinstone Institution. Colonel Jervis, a member of the Board and the most prominent advocate of the Vernaculars gave expression to his opinion that the Engineering class should be conducted in the Vernacular and not in English. This statement of the Colonel was brought to the notice of the Board by Government; and though it was afterwards found that the statement was made unofficially, the reference gave the Vernacularists a useful opportunity of starting a fresh discussion over the decision of the Board on the question of the medium of instruction. The discussion aroused very great interest and almost every member recorded his own views in the matter. Some of the prominent members recorded several lengthy minutes and whenever the matter was referred to the Government a new crop of correspondence was added by the Government replies. The story of the controversy between the 'Anglicists' and the 'Vernacularists' may be briefly told as follows:

The controversy was opened by Colonel Jervis in an able minute in defence of the Vernacularists. Soon one or two of the members who had formed the majority of the Board on the opposite side turned against their side and the Vernacularists were victorious. The weight of the Government which had been brought up in the traditions of Elphinstone and Malcolm was thrown on their side. Sir E. Perry, the champion of the Anglicists, was about to resign out of respect for his own opinion and dignity. But his followers, knowing that his resignation would cut off the hope of any future chance of success, persuaded him to remain on the Board.

He put up a fresh fight; but it was of no avail. Government was obstinate and it held up the view of the Vernacularists more openly and

34. *Note.*—Mr. J. A. Richey, C.I.E., devotes 20 out of 28 pages to extracts from this controversy in his Selections from Educational Records, Part II.

with greater determination. At last Sir E. Perry resorted to his trump card. He knew that he could find his champions in Calcutta, the seat of the Government of India. Sir E. Perry was a great man and he carried great influence in higher quarters. He insisted that the Bombay Government should refer the whole matter to the Government of India before arriving at their final opinion on such a momentous question of policy which was directly at variance with the policy of the Government of India. The Bombay Government could not but do what Sir E. Perry asked of it. The expected did happen. The Government of India expressed its strong disapproval of the Bombay policy in a minute by the Hon'ble Mr. Bethune dated 23rd January 1851. In one of the concluding paragraphs of the Minute Mr. Bethune writes :

"I think the indication of such opinion held by the Bombay Government of sufficient moment to make it desirable that the Government of India should intimate to the Hon'ble Court (of Directors) that they have drawn its attention, and expressed its own opinion, on a question, the right solution of which is fraught with consequences of such immeasurable importance to the welfare of the whole Indian empire."[35]

Thus was imposed on Bombay the policy which fifteen years ago was adopted in Bengal according to the decision which Macaulay gave in his Minute of 1835. Hitherto Bombay Government was concerned more with Vernacular than with English Education. Its aim was the creation of a Vernacular literature by steady support of translations and original books. The English Schools were held subordinate to the Vernacular schools. It was not blind to the need of English education, which received its due share of support at its hands from the earliest beginnings of Western education. But in its opinion the ultimate salvation of the people was to be achieved through the Vernaculars and therefore they were to receive the main share of the State aid and support. It never wanted to separate the 'educated' class from the rest of the people by the same gulf of exclusive use of English language which had already separated the rulers from the ruled. Its aim regarding the spread of higher branches of literature and science was well expressed by Mr. Willoughby—a member of the Governor's Council—when he wrote 'When we possess equally good class books in both languages (i.e. Vernacular and English) the Vernaculars should be preferred'.[36] And to bring about this most desirable end not only the Vernaculars were to be enriched by new books but the scholars learning English were to be kept in touch with the Vernaculars so that they might be able to convey their knowledge to the people through their own

35. Selections from Educational Records, Part II (1840-1859), by J. A. Richey, p. 31.
36. ibid., p. 28.

language. Not only that, but its highest ambition (it informed[37] the Board of Education) was to bring the Vernaculars to such a pitch of culture and eminence as would enable the scholars in its 'English' schools and colleges to dispense with the learning of European arts and sciences by means of English books and in English language.

The effect of the admonition from the Government of India was that the Bombay Government lost its usual enthusiasm for the cause of the Vernaculars of which throughout the last 25 years it was the avowed champion in the whole of India. It remained tamed and subdued; but it never yielded. In spite of the disapproval of its policy by the Government of India it remained ever faithful to the numerous vernacular schools which unlike the Bengal Government it had spread over the presidency. But one thing it gave up and gave up for good. The ultimate aim of directing the education of the present so that the future might be made easier for the Vernaculars in the spread of higher knowledge was kept aside for ever. The Government no longer troubled itself with its oft-repeated desire of creating a vernacular literature of a superior type for the diffusion of higher knowledge. And with this went down the hopes of the Vernacularists for which they were fighting. Thus closed the controversy and Sir E. Perry triumphed. For, the main contention of the controversy was not the neglect of the English and the care of the Vernacular or the reverse. The controversy centered round one central problem—What should be the medium of instruction for imparting the higher branches of European knowledge? And so far as that problem was concerned the fate of the Vernaculars was sealed for ever.

We shall now describe some of the attempts which were made in Bombay with the object of diffusing 'superior' education through the medium of the Vernaculars. By 'superior' education we mean here post-primary education.

We shall first confine our attention to the Poona Sanskrit College which for several years, under the able superintendence of Candy, was doing very creditable work of the cultivation of the Vernacular (Marathi) until about 1857, when it was made a purely 'English' College affiliated to the University of Bombay.

In 1837 Sir Robert Grant, the then Governor of Bombay, established in connection with the College, a medical branch 'where English medicine was to be studied through translations along with Oriental medicine'. Soon after, anatomical models were supplied for this class and an Indian Doctor—'Bhaoo Doctor'—who knew both Oriental medicine and English surgery was engaged to give instruction in practical surgery. Another attempt to combine the best of the Oriental

37. ibid., p. 20.

Science with Western Science was made in the branch of Astronomy. A new Indian professor of Astronomy was appointed and he was sent to Bombay to study European Astronomy and Geography in the Elphinstone College. Later on a Professor of Vernacular was added whose duty was to teach the pupils of the College not only Vernacular proper but also 'all branches of learning which can be communicated through it'. In 1850-51 four translation exhibitions were established 'to promote the cultivation of the Vernacular language'. In 1851 when the College was reconstructed there was added an assistant (Vernacular) professor of 'Natural Philosophy'. The students of the 'Normal Class', which was added about the same time, studied in the Vernacular among other things, 'natural philosophy, Chemistry and Political Economy and popular physics'; also 'Trigonometry, Optics and Astronomy'.

This vigorous attempt at teaching these branches of knowledge in the Poona College through the Vernacular, evoked an outburst of joy from Candy, the able superintendent of the College. He wrote:

"Estimating most highly, as I do, the value and importance of English as a means for the intellectual and moral improvement of India, I yet cannot but see that the masses of its population must be educated through their own tongue. I rejoice, therefore, that through the endowment of a Vernacular professorship, of Vernacular translation Exhibitions, and of Normal Scholarships, such excellent provision has been made for the improvement of the vernacular tongue of this part of India, for enriching it with translated stores from the English and for qualifying schoolmasters to use it as a medium for educating their countrymen." [38]

The Elphinstone College at Bombay was a purely 'English' institution; and therefore it did not undertake, like the Poona College, any special work in the cultivation of the Vernaculars. However, definite attempts were made to keep the students in touch with their Vernaculars so that they might serve the useful purpose of diffusing their knowledge derived from their English study among their own countrymen through the vernaculars. For, as we have already seen that was the expressed object of those who subscribed liberally to the fund of the College in 1827. It appears from the reports of the College that compositions in the Vernacular on various topics of social and material progress of the country formed a routine of the work of the College. This part of the college attracted public donations during the years 1842-54. They were:

---

38. Report of the Board of Education, Bombay, 1850-51, p. 66.

(I) The Sundar Jeevaji Prize[39] (1842). The Annual Interest on Rs. 1,000 was to be given as 'a suitable prize for the greatest proficiency in the Marathi language'.

(II) The Gaikawar Scholarships[40] (1850-51). On the occasion of his visit to the College, the Gaikawar of Baroda placed Rs. 5,000 at the disposal of the College. From the annual interest of the sum he desired to establish two Scholarships 'one for proficiency in the Marathi language, and the other for proficiency in Gujrathi . . . the one his own Vernacular, and the other the Vernacular of his subjects'.

(III) The Kibe Prize[41] (1853-54). Rajashree Gunputrao Vithal Kibe of Indore gave Rs. 1,500 at 4% for a 'prize for the best essay in one of the Vernacular languages on some subject in Chemistry or Natural Philosophy'.

Let us now turn to the English schools. When the Central English School was opened at Bombay (1824) soon after Elphinstone's Minute, it was believed that the master in charge of the school ought to be thoroughly conversant with the Vernaculars of the pupils. Elphinstone wrote about the master :

"A master I understand could be found at a salary of 50 rupees, to be doubled when he should pass an examination in Marathi, and again increased by the amount of his original salary when he should pass in Gujrathi."[42]

For about 10 years, i.e. upto 1835, the master in charge of the English school at Bombay was made to acquaint himself with the Vernaculars ; and we believe till that time though instruction in all school subjects was given in English, the Vernaculars were freely used in explanations, etc. But in 1835 two new masters came from England and they were immediately placed in charge of the English school. To keep them waiting till they could acquire a thorough knowledge of the Vernacular before taking up the work of teaching was to waste money and time. Moreover, by that time, the policy of Elphinstone had lost its original force ; and so far as the English school was concerned, it was now accepted as a necessary principle that everything should be taught through English from the very beginning of the school course. The teaching of the rudimentary subjects in the lower standards, in English, could have been avoided easily, as these lower classes were usually taught by 'Monitors' who knew both English and Vernacular. But in that case, the English masters would have been unable to supervise and direct the work of the monitors. And so, to

39. Report of the Board of Education for 1842, p. 5.
40. Report of the Board of Education for 1850-51, p. 37.
41. Report of the Board of Education for 1853-54, p. 29.
42. Official Writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone, ed. by G. W. Forrest, p. 95.

suit the convenience of the English masters and help them to keep up 'efficiency' in the lower standards, little boys came to be subjected to the teaching of all school subjects in English even before they had learnt to read well in English. This state of things continued till about 1844. In that year in the examination of arithmetic it was found out that,

"When a question was put to a class in the English language they were unable to give an answer, but when it was put in their Vernacular language, the answer was quickly and satisfactorily given."[43]

As a result of a further enquiry it was declared by the superintendent of the school that the progress of mathematics had been much more slower than it would have been had Vernacular language been made the medium of instruction. The matter was brought to the notice of the Board of Education and permission was obtained to teach the subject through Vernacular in the lower classes of the English school. The results of the experiment were satisfactory in every respect. The oft-expressed fear that the teaching of subjects (other than English) through the Vernacular would have a bad reflective effect on English was proved to be unfounded. The Principal of the Elphinstone College wrote in this connection : 'As I anticipated, this has been done without in any degree retarding their progress in English. My own opinion decidedly is that the reverse is the fact.'[44]

From 1849-50, it became the usual custom to teach in the lower classes of the English school, English as a language and other subjects such as arithmetic, geography and history in the Vernacular.

Hitherto we have confined our attention to what was being done in the one school at Bombay. But in those days Bombay School was the model for all other English schools ; and what was done there was followed in schools outside Bombay.

"In these (lower) classes a portion of the time is devoted to the study of their vernacular language, with the view of keeping up and extending that knowledge of it acquired in the Vernacular schools, and also by way of relief to the mind, which, in boys of that tender age, loses its elasticity by long continued application to one (English) study."[45] The method adopted to achieve this object was 'translation' in which frequent practice was given. That was thought to be sufficient. It will thus be seen that the English schools which connected the Vernacular schools and the College gave the least attention to the study of the Vernacular or the teaching of subjects through its medium.

We shall now see what the Vernacular schools of the time did to teach the higher subjects. Today the Vernacular schools of the Presi-

43. Report of the Board of Education for 1844, p. 5.
44. Report of the Board of Education for 1847 and 1848, p. 20.
45. Report of the Board of Education, Bombay, for 1844, p. 4.

dency teach only the 'elementary' subjects to the great majority of their students. But during the time we are reviewing, they were not merely 'elementary' schools, as they are today; they were a combination of what we call today (in Bombay) 'primary' and 'secondary' schools. As we have so often remarked, the Bombay system was mainly 'Vernacular'. The subjects, which are taught today in the higher classes of secondary schools in English, were taught in those days through the Vernacular in Vernacular schools by means of the books prepared in the Vernacular in the days of Elphinstone and Malcolm.

It is of supreme importance to realise this difference between the 'Vernacular' schools of today and those of old days. We therefore give below a few extracts which shall clearly prove that the old Vernacular schools (at least the best of them) taught in the Vernacular almost all the subjects which the secondary schools of today teach in English.

Writing about the Mathematics taught in these Vernacular schools, Candy remarked (1841):

"The books used are the two volumes of a course of Arithmetic, from Hutton and Bonnycastle, translated by . . . Colonel Jervis. In all the best schools that are of any standing the senior classes have gone through the whole of the first volume, and the algebraic portion of the second. To this in some schools the senior students have added the Mensuration of Planes and Solids, and the Elements of Geometry and Trigonometry."[46]

In the Vernacular schools at Malvan it is stated (1844) that some of the pupils had got 'a few general notions on some of the subjects treated of in the conversations on natural philosophy, such as gravitation, the formation of clouds, atmospheric pressure, etc.'.[47] It is also stated that they (pupils) showed a very extensive knowledge of the principle of equations and their application to practical solutions.

It is told about some of the schools in the Ratnagiri district (1847-48):

"The boys . . . are acquainted on an average with 80 propositions of Jervis' Hutton's Geometry or a resumé of nearly the whole of Euclid's plane and solid Geometry, besides a well-founded and extensive knowledge of Geography . . . history, etc. . . . ; to these acquirements may, in several cases, be added an elementary knowledge of Astronomy and of the higher branches of Mathematics."[48]

---

46. Report of the Board of Education for 1840-41, p. 52.
47. Report of the Board of Education for 1844, p. 17.
48. Report of the Board of Education for 1847-48, p. 41.

About Poona No. 4 Vernacular School it is written (1849) :

Besides the usual subjects "this School added the elements of Natural Philosophy, the History of England, and Trigonometry, in which boys of the first class displayed a fair proficiency ".[49]

About Dhulia Vernacular School (1849) : In Mathematics the upper classes "appear to have made very considerable progress, and five of the pupils had gone through quadratic equations, and 95 propositions in Hutton ".[50]

About Vernacular School at Someshwar (1849) :

"A considerable number of the boys of the Senior classes have acquired, besides the usual course, a considerable insight into the elements of logarithms and practical geometry." [51]

Superintendent Graham wrote of the Ahmedabad No. 4 Vernacular School (1853-54) :

"In short, the studies and acquirements of the Higher classes here would do credit to the higher classes of many English Schools." [52]

In 1854 came the great Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company. The views of the Directors on the question of medium of instruction are embodied in paragraphs 11 to 14 of the document. This Despatch was the first authoritative document received by the Indian Government from Home Authorities on the subject of education. Hitherto as occasion demanded separate despatches were sent to the different local Governments on the subject. And as the different Presidencies had evolved different systems of their own, the despatches were meant more for each Presidency separately than for all together. But the new Despatch was a common one for all. And hence it it necessary to see what it had to say on the question of medium of instruction :

"It is neither our aim nor desire to substitute the English language for the Vernacular dialects of the country. We have been most sensible of the importance of the use of the languages which alone are understood by the great mass of the population. . . . It is indispensable, therefore, that, in any general system of education, the study of them should be assiduously attended to, and any acquaintance with improved European knowledge which is to be communicated to the great mass of the people—whose circumstances prevent them from acquiring a high order of education, and who cannot be expected to overcome the

49. ibid for 1849, p. 20.
50. Report of the Board of Education for 1849, p. 20.
51. ibid., p. 26.
52. Report of the Board of Education for 1853-54, p. 62

difficulties of a foreign language—can only be conveyed to them through one or other of those Vernacular languages."

"In any general system of education, the English language should be taught where there is a demand for it ; but such instruction should always be combined with a careful attention to the study of the Vernacular language of the district, and with such general instruction as can be conveyed through that language ; and while the English language continues to be made use of as by far the most perfect medium for the education of those persons who have acquired a sufficient knowledge of it to receive general instruction through it, the Vernacular languages to teach the far larger classes who are ignorant of, or imperfectly acquainted with English. This can only be done effectually through the instrumentality of masters and professors, who may, by themselves, knowing English and thus having full access to the latest improvements in knowledge of every kind, impart to their fellow-countrymen through the medium of their mother tongue, the information which they have thus obtained. At the same time, and as the importance of the Vernacular becomes more appreciated, the vernacular literature of India, will be gradually enriched by translations of European books or by the original compositions of men whose minds have been imbued with the spirit of European advancement, so that European knowledge may be gradually placed in this manner within the reach of all classes of people. We look, therefore, to the English language and the Vernacular languages of India together as the media of the diffusion of European knowledge, and it is our desire to see them cultivated together in all schools in India of a sufficiently high class to maintain school-masters possessing the requisite qualifications."[53]

Commenting upon this passage, the Calcutta University Commission write : "Nothing could be clearer. It was the aim of the Directors not to substitute the English for the Vernacular, in Secondary Schools, but, first, to cultivate a bi-lingual system for those pupils for whom English was regarded as necessary, and secondly, if possible, to develop in time the Vernacular schools upto the level of those in which the medium was English."[54]

The Despatch itself makes the point clearer (para. 44) :

"We are unwilling to maintain the broad line of separation which at present exists between schools in which the media for imparting the instruction differ. The knowledge conveyed is, no doubt, at the present time, much higher in the Anglo-Vernacular than in the Vernacular schools ; but the difference will become less marked, and the latter more efficient, as the gradual enrichment of the Vernacular

53. Despatch of 1854, paragraphs 13-14.
54. Report, Vol. II, p. 233.

languages in works of education allows these schemes of study to be enlarged, and as a more numerous class of school-masters is raised up, able to impart a superior education."[55]

The best way to proceed with our enquiry is to state clearly the main points of the Despatch and to see how far they were carried into effect during the succeeding years by the Department of Public Instruction and the Bombay University—both of which were brought into existence by the Despatch in order to carry out its proposals.

The points are :

(1) In higher institutions to combine 'a careful attention to the study of the Vernacular' with that of English or to 'cultivate a bi-lingual system'.

(2) The gradual elimination of the existing difference regarding the quality and quantity of instruction between English and Vernacular Schools, so that the Vernacular schools might rise in time to the level of English Schools.

Vernacular study in the higher institutions

We have already seen that the Poona College was a veritable nursery of the Vernacular when the Despatch was sent to India. In the Vernacular Department of the College there was a Professor of Vernacular and arrangements were made to teach the pupils all branches of knowledge that could be taught through the Vernacular. In the Elphinstone College the work in connection with the Vernacular was not so intensive ; but by means of translation and essays the pupils were given some opportunity to improve their mastery over the Vernacular. A definite place was assigned to the study of the Vernacular in the College classes and in the annual report of the College for 1850 we find one section entirely devoted to 'Report on the Vernacular classes in the College'.

Soon after the formation of the Department of Public Instruction, the Director thought it advisable to do something more for Vernacular study in the Colleges. So much was he impressed with the need of raising the Vernaculars that he actually expressed his wish to establish[56] chairs of Vernaculars in the new organisation of the Colleges which was shortly to be effected to bring them upto the requirements of the University. But somehow the chairs were not heard of any more. Instead, a new order of tutor-students was brought into being, and they were called 'Daxina Fellows' as their remuneration came from a part of the Daxina. The holders of these fellowships were to be picked

55. Despatch of 1854, para 44.
56. Report of the D.P.I. for 1856-57, p. 52.

men from the Colleges well versed in the Vernacular. Each senior fellow who received Rs. 100 a month was 'to produce annually one treatise on some useful branch of learning in a Vernacular language'.[57] The total sum spent on these fellowships came to Rs. 14,460.

In 1859-60, the University of Bombay was instituted and following the wishes of the Despatch and the practice of the Colleges, it included in the studies prescribed for all University examinations from Matriculation to B.A. 'Vernacular' as one of the subjects. This recognition of the Vernacular by the University as a subject of study for its degrees gave a great impetus to the study of the Vernaculars and the College 'Fellows' spent a part of their time in teaching the Vernacular literature and Grammar for the University examinations. In fact, from 1858 both the Colleges at Bombay and Poona taught Vernaculars systematically. In the new examinations for scholarships instituted in that year called 'Senior and Junior' Scholarship Examinations two papers were assigned to the Vernacular, one in Translation and Composition and another in Grammar. But in doing so the Directors sowed the seeds of failure which was soon to follow. The medium of expression of the answers in the Vernacular papers was to be English. It is difficult to imagine what prompted the Director to make such a rule. The tutors were Indians and the pupils were Indians, both having a common mother-tongue. The books studied were purely Vernacular. This perverted way of teaching the Vernacular led the tutors to use English as the medium of explanation and the lessons in the Vernacular became indirectly lessons in English. Yet it cannot be doubted that both the Department and the University were doing something for the Vernaculars.

This state of things continued till 1863 and then came the mightiest blow to all hopes of the Vernacular ever becoming a medium of high culture in future. In 1863 the University of Bombay drove away the Vernaculars from its College course of studies. Henceforth, therefore, the Colleges had nothing to do with the Vernaculars. Though the Colleges were under the administrative control of the Department, they solely existed to prepare candidates for University degrees; and if the University did not want the candidates to take up Vernacular for the degree examination, why should the Colleges bother themselves about it?

As a consequence of this exclusion of the Vernaculars from College studies, the funds, both public and private, which were hitherto earmarked for the encouragement of the Vernaculars, were alienated from that purpose. For instance the Daxina Fellowships established in 1858, were meant expressly for the cultivation of the Vernaculars. The Director wrote about them:

57. Report of the D.P.I. for 1857-58, p. 45.

'I trust the Daxina endowments may be made real and powerful agents for the encouragement of native literature and learning.'[58]

(1) When the Colleges lost their interest in the Vernaculars was it not natural that the sum expressly meant for the encouragement of the Vernacular should have been diverted to some other purpose contributing to that object ? But that was not to be. The Director ordered that these 'fellows' should be employed as tutors or assistant professors to teach the usual college subjects.

(2) The Gaikwar Scholarships were expressly given by the Gaikwar of Baroda for the promotion of the Vernacular study. But now they were given for general efficiency like other scholarships.

(3) The Sunday Jeevaji Prize originally given by the donor for a Vernacular Essay, came to be given for a Sanskrit Essay.

(4) The Kibe Prize also meant for a Vernacular Essay was now awarded for an English Essay.

The first act of alienating the part of the Daxina from its original object we leave aside without comment. The Director as a servant of Government might do whatever he liked with the Fund which came directly from Government. But on the remaining three acts of alienation, we cannot excuse his action. The three remaining funds were distinctly given by the donors for the purpose of the encouragement of Vernaculars. The College authorities were simply trustees of the funds ; and as such, they had no right to spend the money for any purpose other than the specified one. We believe that such a diversion of funds is only justified when the original object ceases to exist. But was there any justification on that score in the case under discussion ? Did the Vernaculars cease to exist in the land ? The University did not want them ; but that only means that the University did not care for the wishes of the community for whose welfare it existed. The Gaikwar Scholarships were for proficiency in the Marathi and Gujrati languages and the two prizes for best essays in the Vernacular. We think it was quite possible to subject the competitors to the required test without infringing on the requirements of the University. When the scholars could write essays in Sanskrit or English could they not do so in the Vernacular ? We utterly fail to understand the propriety of this action of the College authorities. On the whole, we are led to believe that the spirit of the University was spreading abroad and the College authorities and the Department were coming under its influence cultivating an unconscious hostility to the Vernaculars.

The Poona College came to be a purely 'English' institution like the Elphinstone College from 1857. The Vernacular Department of the College ceased to exist from that date. The Vernacular studies in

58. Report of the D.P.I. for 1856-57, p. 87.

that College met the same fate after the action of the University. So, from 1864 or thereabout the Colleges washed their hands of the encouragement or cultivation of the Vernacular in any way. Henceforth the University graduate had not to read even a word of his mother-tongue. Whatever knowledge of the Vernacular he had in the school (and we shall see later on that it was not much) got rusted in the three or four years of his College life. How was it possible, therefore, for such men, however brilliant they may be, when equipped with so little knowledge of their own mother-tongue, to be the instructors of their fellow-brothers in knowledge which they had acquired for themselves in English ?

We do not exaggerate in the least when we say that generations of graduates have passed out of the portals of the University, versed in the Arts and Sciences of Europe and in the English tongue, and yet more than ninety per cent of them cannot express themselves well in the mother-tongue, let alone their writing a tolerably good Vernacular composition. The least that the University ought to have done, was to keep up the flame of the Vernacular burning, by making it a compulsory subject ; had it done so, we are quite sure that the future would have been somewhat hopeful.

It is very interesting to make an attempt to enquire further into the cause of this sudden determination of the University to exclude the Vernaculars from its College examinations. Surely in doing so the University was going against the very wishes of its creator—the Despatch of 1854. Further, it was not the introduction of a new subject in the curriculum ; it was the elimination of a subject which was being taught for years in the Colleges before the institution of the University and for four years under its own regulations. We are not able to refer to the Bombay University Minutes of the time, they being not available. But we learn from the Calcutta University Commission Report (Vol. II, p. 235) that the Calcutta University removed the Vernacular from its degree courses in 1864 and a reference to the Minutes of that University and the Convocation speech of Sir Henry Maine delivered on 11th March 1863, throws light on the question.

Sir Henry Maine says :

"One great step forward has been made in the substitution—of course the partial and gradual substitution—of classical languages for Vernacular or spoken languages, as subjects for examination. I will not trouble you with all the grounds on which this reform is justified. If you wish to understand them thoroughly, I commend you to the published writings of the accomplished scholar—whom I am proud to call my friend—who is Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay." [59]

59. Minutes of the Calcutta University for 1863-64, p. 152.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay from February 1863 to December 1864 was Sir Alexander Grant. Now this gentleman was undoubtedly the ablest and the most distinguished Educational Officer that ever went to India.[60] He was a great classical scholar and the best service he rendered to the cause of Bombay Education was the introduction of a systematic study of classical languages both Eastern and Western in the University courses. Not only was he a very active and sincere worker while he was in Bombay, but even after his retirement he exerted his influence to promote the cause of Indian Education.[61] But it is an irony of fate that this very gentleman should have been responsible for the greatest mistake ever committed by the Bombay University—the driving out of the Vernaculars from its colleges. Sir Henry Maine says that the reasons for this subversion of the Vernaculars can be found in Sir A. Grant's 'published writings'. So far as we can see there is no special mention of such reasons in his writings available to us. But one thing is certain, that, as a great admirer of classical studies he persuaded the University to bring about the reform.

We are sorry to note that the 'reform'—the elimination of Vernaculars and insistence on the introduction of classical studies—was distinctly meant for the good of the Vernacular itself. The Governor of Bombay—Sir Bartle Frere—as the Chancellor of the University, said in 1863 :

"Some discussion has arisen which must, I believe, bear useful fruit regarding the relative merits of the classical languages of this country as compared with the Vernaculars, as objects of University study. I will not anticipate the results of this discussion. No one estimates more highly than I do the importance of Vernacular education ; no one has a higher estimate of the capabilities of some of our Indian Vernacular languages ; no one has higher hopes as to the space which they may one day fill in the literature of India. But I would remind you that the improvement of any vernacular language, which has but a scanty modern literature of its own, must depend mainly on the cultivation of classical languages. However great the natural capacities of a language, it cannot become suited to the wants of a highly civilised people, except by the cultivation of those languages which already have a classical literature of their own."

To illustrate he adds :

"It was the men who learnt, and lectured, and examined in Latin and Greek, who matured the modern English and German, French and Italian, out of the illiterate dialects which served the purposes of our ruder ancestors, and it is only by a similar process that we can hope to

60. Education and Statesmanship in India, by H. & R. James, p. 113.
61. Convocation Addresses, Bombay and Madras, ed. by S. Rau, p. 46.

see the Vernacular languages of modern India occupy the same position of popular usefulness and permanence." [62]

These words of the Chancellor, we are sure, voiced the opinion of the anti-vernacularists led by Sir Alexander Grant. We can, therefore, safely say that it was for the future welfare of the Vernaculars that they were driven out of the University, and classical languages were made compulsory instead. There is no doubt that the words of the Chancellor had a great force behind them. No one can deny that a critical study of the classics is necessary for the embryo vernacular scholar especially when the Vernacular is a direct derivative of the classical language and is in a crude state of culture. The historical illustration of the European scholars that follows brings a further conviction of the supreme need of classical studies being made compulsory in the Colleges. So far the argument is perfectly sound. But let us look to the surroundings of the India scholar and of the European scholar. The European scholar 'learnt, lectured and examined' in Latin and Greek. The Indian Scholar 'learnt, lectured and examined' in English and not in 'classics'. The European scholar had only to build on the crude material that already existed around him ; he did not impart new things and new ideas and new culture. The Indian scholar was expected to build a new structure and he had therefore a different and more arduous task to perform. Since the days of Macaulay's Minute it was decided that the oriental culture ought to supersede the Occidental. To him, therefore, the real 'classical language' was not Sanskrit or Arabic but English. The European scholar studied classics out and out, the Indian, as a minor subject. As soon as the European scholar stepped out of his lecture hall or his study he had to face the realities of the social life outside which was entirely 'vernacular' in all its aspects. He talked, he wrote, he lectured in Vernacular ; for, otherwise he would be isolated from Society which conducted all its business in the Vernacular. In fact, we believe, for his very maintenance and to satisfy the cravings of his social instincts he had no other alternative but to resort to the Vernacular. The printing press came to his help in time and as soon as the Society began to take more interest in the acquisition of knowledge he was there to pour forth in the Vernacular his acquirements for the benefit of his countrymen. In fact it was a mutual help. The scholar and his society jointly helped in the advance of the Vernaculars. Taken separately each was helpless. Now let us look to the Indian scholar. A 'master' of Western knowledge and culture (and not of the oriental) he came out of the University, and at the very door he was greeted by the rulers as a man whom they could honour with their choicest gifts. His superiority over his fellowmen was based upon his exclusively 'English culture'

62. Convocation Addresses of Bombay and Madras, ed. by S. Rau, p. 12.

and his command over 'English'. Thanks to the patronage of the rulers he could live independently of his Society, drawing a comfortable salary which he owed to his 'English'. The European scholar had to cater for the wants of his society which included Government. The Indian scholar lived for Government which was altogether separated from Society. Under the powerful patronage of Government he could, if he wished to do so, defy the very Society around him. What need had he to look to the Society for help? He belonged to a different 'caste'—the caste of the rulers. Drafted into Government service, from morn to night it was his 'English' that kept him busy. He wrote in English, talked in English and conducted all his business in English. The books he read (if at all he had any further need of reading) were in English. As to the advancement of his own learning, there was no further need of any kind. The comfortable situation he was placed in, in any profession directly or indirectly connected with Government, was based more on his knowledge of 'English' language itself—than on his other attainments. That such a state of things existed in those days of University graduates there is not the least doubt. Justice Gibbs —the Vice-Chancellor of Bombay—in his Convocation address of 1875 pertinently says:

"There is another topic, one which has been before alluded to by those who have occupied this chair, that we do not find those who succeed in their educational career, and become our graduates, following up their education after they leave College. As I told the students at the Grant College a few days ago, they do not consider the important fact that their real education only then commences, that unless they are content simply to exist and do not desire to grow, they must ever continue 'apt to learn'. . . . Those who enter on liberal professions and have to earn their bread by their skill, are obliged in some degree to keep pace with the times; but those who enter the service of the State are too apt to rest content with their lot and find in their daily office routine sufficient for them."[63]

The parallel of the European scholar had its counterpart in India, not in the new University graduate, but in the learned Shastri or pundit of pre-British period. It was he who lived entirely for the community; the royal patronage did not keep him grinding the daily grist of routine administrative work at the desk. He it was who produced an enormous poetic literature in the Vernacular, translating a good deal of the Sanskrit lore into the Vernacular. He studied Sanskrit but as soon as he came out into the society he had to give up his Sanskrit and preach or teach the masses in the Vernacular. Unfortunately the press did not come to his help as it did in Europe; and that

63. Convocation Addresses of Bombay and Madras, ed. by S. Rau, p. 77.

was why Europe advanced in the Vernaculars and India remained behind in that field.

The University was producing a new class of Indians by its exclusively English education, a class, in Macaulay's words : "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, words and intellect."[64] Instead of advancing the cause of the Vernaculars, the graduates were pushing away the Vernaculars farther and farther from them. The spectacle had manifested itself clearly as early as 1850 when Mr. Bethune wrote gloatingly about it :

"Not only our advanced students read and speak English with as much fluency and correctness as English themselves, but where a continually growing class of educated natives employ the English language by choice in their communications with each other, even in matters relating to their own families and most confidential affairs."[65] This state of things is now so common that it is taken for granted by all (there may be a few honourable exceptions) who call themselves educated. We do not lament over this widespread use of English even in private correspondence simply because it is English. We are sorry because this exclusive adoption of a language unknown to the millions around has kept the educated Indian from being useful to his fellow-countrymen. The Indian Universities were to be centres of Western knowledge and the graduates were to be the messengers of that knowledge to the millions outside. How can they fulfil this function if they fail to cultivate the Vernacular and to get over it a sufficient mastery to speak, read and write in it.

In the first Convocation of Bombay University (1862), the Governor addressed the first batch of graduates as follows :

"But while I trust that we may henceforward look for profound scholars among the educated Hindoos and Parsees, I trust that one of your great objects will always be to enrich your own Vernacular literature with the learning which you acquire in this University. Remember, I pray you, that what is here taught is a sacred trust confided to you for the benefit of your countrymen. The learning which can here be imparted to a few hundreds, or at most to a few thousands, of scholars, must by you be made available, through your own Vernacular tongues to the many millions of Hindoostan. The great majority of your countrymen can only learn through the language which is taught them at their mother's knee, and it must be through such language mainly that you can impart to them all that you would communicate of European learning and Science."[66]

---

64. B. D. Basu: *Education in India under E.I. Company*, p. 87.
65. Selections from Educational Records, Part II (1840-49), by J. A. Richey (1922), p. 30.
66. Convocation Speeches of Bombay and Madras, ed. by S. Rau, p. 4.

The next year (1863) by the exclusion of the Vernaculars from the University course the last hope for the realisation of this main object of the University was frustrated.

But let us now see what kind of classical studies were imposed upon the University student in the new change. Writing in 1892, Sir Raymond West says about Bombay graduates :

"The general outrun of Sanskrit teaching . . . (in the Colleges of Bombay) . . . is stunted and meagre as compared to the needs of the community and of the age. The ordinary students just pass the examinations and obtain their degrees on a very slender minimum of true critical scholarship. A certain limited command of Sanskrit is most easily acquired by those whose Vernacular language rests so largely on a Sanskrit foundation, and whose daily converse teems with Sanskrit phrases. But this kind of rote-learning need not necessarily imply a more thorough scholarship than a courier's acquaintance with French or Latin." [67]

And this is the 'cultivation of classical languages' for which the Vernaculars were thrust aside. We fail to understand how the University authorities of the time came to the conclusion that a smattering of classical language would tend to improve the imperfect Vernaculars, themselves left outside the pale of the University.[68] No one could deny that the language in which a youth acquires his knowledge during the most formative period of his life becomes his future language for all purposes of improvement of self and of the community. The Indian graduate could thus write in English with a tolerable facility if the Indian Society were so constituted as to take advantage of his writings. Every Englishman speaks English ; but every Englishman cannot be a teacher of his countrymen. For that a prolonged exertion and close application to self-improvement is necessary. Not only must he make a special study of his mother-tongue in order to acquire the requisite facility of pen and speech, but he must further master the contents of his subject and the technique of language in that subject. Every Indian graduate speaks his mother-tongue ; but having altogether neglected its improvement while in College, with all his English learning he is just on a par with a man in the street in the mastery over his mother-tongue. To speak the truth, he is even worse. For, the man in the street, having nothing to do with any other language, can speak at least a pure Vernacular. With the Indian graduate the case is different. The graduate, having subjected himself to read and think in English all along the formative period of his life, is not able even

---

67. Transaction of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists (London, 1893), Vol. I, p. 77.

68. *Note.*—It is gratifying to note that there was a section of the Senate which regretted this exclusion of the Vernaculars. See Convocation Address (1870) of Dr. Wilson, in Convocation Address of Bombay and Madras, ed. by S. Rau, p. 52.

to speak pure Vernacular. If he is asked to speak to a purely vernacular audience he is a failure ; for, every now and then he will unwittingly use English words and English phrases and thus disgust his audience. He does not mean to disappoint them, poor creature. He is a helpless slave of his own training. The University has so willed it that he should be a stranger among his own people. In spite of all these disabilities it is gratifying to see that there are found here and there graduates who are perfect masters of both English and Vernacular. But such men, without exception, are not made so by the University. They did for themselves in after years what the University failed to do for them. Undaunted by failures they persisted in the cultivation of their mother-tongue side by side with the improvement of their English knowledge. But the number of such men could be multiplied a hundredfold if the students are made to mind their vernaculars side by side with their English, while they pass through the most important years of their student life.

Coming down from the University to the Schools, let us first take the matriculation class, the stepping stone to the University. During the two or three years that preceded the formation of the University, the Department of Public Instruction had been very busy giving a definite shape to the course of studies in the highest class in the high school which afterwards became the Matriculation class. In the rules for the High School examination which corresponded to the Matriculation, Mr. Howard, the then Director, ruled that the medium of expression of all answers in all subjects including the Vernacular was to be English.

When the University came on the scene it just copied the regulation of Mr. Howard and in its turn demanded from its candidates that they should answer all questions including those in the Vernacular in English. The medium of expression being English, it need not be told that the medium of instruction came to be English. How can it be otherwise ? Suppose a boy is taught Arithmetic in Vernacular ; ask him to solve a problem and write it in English. He must fail to do justice to his knowledge. There is a technique peculiar to each subject, let it be Arithmetic or anything ; and unless the boy knows that technique in English he could not write in English the solution of that problem. This decision of the University which dates from about 1860 gave rise to the practice, which prevails to this day, of teaching all school subjects through the medium of English. Not only Mathematics, History and Geography, but even Sanskrit and the Vernaculars came to be taught in English. Curious specimens of Vernacular Grammars explained in English language and in English grammatical terminology sprang up into existence to help the embryo Vernacular scholar in his onward progress in Vernacular. The same with Sanskrit. As to the

teaching of Vernacular through the English language we need make no comment. But about the teaching of Sanskrit we need add a word. The prominent vernaculars of Bombay are so much allied to Sanskrit that ordinarily a good many words and phrases in the Vernacular are purely Sanskrit. If the boy learns Sanskrit through the medium of Vernacular his task becomes extremely easy. We repeat once more what Sir Raymond West said on the point :

"A certain limited command of Sanskrit is most easily acquired by those whose vernacular language rests so largely on a Sanskrit foundation, and whose daily converse teems with Sanskrit phrases." If some command of Sanskrit is obtained by the very knowledge of the mother-tongue, how much easier would it be if they are taught Sanskrit through the medium of the Vernacular. In Mathematics, history, geography and 'General Knowledge' the same thing happened. Previous to the institution of the University all these subjects were taught in English in the English schools. But if the University wanted to bring about a progressive rise of the Vernacular as a medium of instruction as the Despatch of 1854 expected it to do, it was just here that the opportunity was to be taken. Had it given an option of answering the questions in these subjects in the Vernacular, there was at least a chance of their being taught in the Vernacular. As we have already seen, at the time of the Despatch the extent of the knowledge of these subjects imparted in some of the best Vernacular schools was not a whit below the Matriculation standard of the University. What was wanted from the University was a fostering care and a helping hand just to lift the Vernaculars up and pave the way to their future prosperity suggested in the Despatch of 1854. The books were there, thanks to the early educators of Bombay. Had they been allowed to be used in the education of the youths who aspired to go to the University and become the future tutors of their countrymen, surely the technique of these subjects in the Vernacular would have remained alive and as time passed it would have grown as rich as it ought to be. Today Bombay is reaping the fruit of this neglect. Some facilities are given only recently by the Department (and not by the University) to teach some of these subjects through the Vernacular. But where are the books ? The old books are gone into utter oblivion. It will not be an exaggeration if we say that the present generation of teachers will be simply shocked if they are told that till the sixties of the last century the boys in the 'Vernacular' schools were taught in Vernacular all the subjects that they now think it impossible to teach for want of proper books. No country has ever produced an 'educational' literature without it being gradually used and built inch by inch in the schools and colleges of the land ;[69] and this is especially the case with the

69. Trevelyan: *The Education of the People of India (1838)*, p. 177.

scientific and semi-scientific subjects. The opportunity was lost when it was there for the University and the Department to be fully utilised. Half a century or more has elapsed since then and even if it is now desired to begin anew and sow new seeds another half a century must pass before the full harvest is reaped. For such things require time to reach perfection. It would have been very instructive to learn how the teaching profession in Bombay would have responded to the teaching of these subjects through the Vernacular, had they been allowed that option. But we get a glimpse of what the teachers thought about the problem from another Presidency. Write the Calcutta University Commission :

"The founders of the University of Calcutta at first acted consistently with the spirit of the Despatch. They provided in the first regulation for the entrance examination that in Geography, History, and Mathematics, the answers might be given in any living language." [70] This permissive regulation would have at least left an open way for the future development of vernaculars as the media of higher instruction ; and possibly 'a class of schools in which English would be taught as a language only, and all other subjects through the Vernacular' would spring up, and thus create such necessities for the preparation of school and other books as would lead to a wider diffusion of European knowledge among the people.[71]

The experiment was, however, nipped in the bud by the University in about two years' time, i.e. in 1861-62. Calcutta got the inspiration from Bombay, for we find [72] that the Government of India sent the Bombay University Regulations to the Calcutta University on the 10th of April 1859, 'for consideration and adoption as might be thought convenient'. The Calcutta University 'considered' and 'adopted' the most vital point and following Bombay cancelled the permission and ruled that 'All answers in each branch shall be given in English, except when otherwise specified' (the words are an exact replica of Bombay regulation).

How did the teachers take this sudden withdrawal of the facility ? Did they really make a good use of the option when it existed ? For, all hope of future development of Vernacular as medium of higher instruction depended on the intensity of their response. To the credit of Bengal teachers we find that they protested against the withdrawal of the facility.[73] The University took no cognisance of that protest.

Another curious regulation of the Bombay University with regard to the Vernacular in the Matriculation examination deserves notice.

---

70. Report, Vol. II, p. 234.
71. ibid., p. 234. (Quoted from Bengal Provincial Committee of the I.E. Commission of 1882.)
72. Minutes of the Calcutta University for 1860, p. 5.
73. Calcutta University Minutes for 1861-62, p. 6.

From the beginning (1859) the Vernacular was one of the optional languages including the classics and this grouping continued upto B.A.; a student who took Vernacular in the Matriculation could carry it on upto B.A. In 1863 the Vernaculars were excluded from the University courses, and a classical language was made compulsory. Let us look at the position of the Vernacular in the Matriculation after this regulation. If a student took up the Vernacular for Matriculation, he was handicapped in the College; he had to take up there only a classical language. Would it not be far better for him to begin the classical language while he was in school, take it up in the Matriculation and thus continue it in the College? He saved thereby much time and labour. So it came about that every student who aspired to go to the College left behind his vernacular four years before Matriculation, for that was the time when a classical language was begun in the School Course. Nay, as the Matriculation dominated entirely the teaching of the High Schools and their feeders—the Anglo-vernacular schools—the pupil and his teacher did not care to attend to the Vernacular properly from the first year of the school course; for both knew that soon it would be of no use for the Matriculation—the goal of ambition of every aspiring scholar. It was in 1906 that the University made the Vernacular a compulsory subject for Matriculation. Thus it will be seen that so far as the requirements of the University were concerned from 1863 to 1906 the young scholar left behind his vernacular study within about three years of his joining the school; and from the age of 12 devoted himself to the learning of a classical language and of the all-powerful English.

It need not be supposed that this change in the attitude of the Bombay University in recognising the importance of the Vernacular at the lowest grade of its examination came from within. It was the result of an outside pressure brought on the University by the Resolution of Government of India dated 11th March 1904 'Indian Education Policy of 1904'. In that Resolution the Government of India pointed out the disastrous effects of the neglect of the Vernacular:

"It has never been the policy of Government to substitute the English language for the Vernacular dialects of the country. It is true that the commercial value which a knowledge of English commands, and the fact that the final examinations of the High Schools are conducted in English, cause the Secondary School to be subjected to a certain pressure to introduce prematurely both the teaching of English as a language and its use as the medium of instruction; while for the same reasons, the study of the Vernacular in these schools is liable to be thrust into the background. This tendency, however, requires to be corrected in the interest of sound education. . . . If the educated classes neglect the cultivation of their own languages, these will assuredly sink to the level of more colloquial dialects possessing no literature worthy

of the name, and no progress will be possible in giving effect to the principle, affirmed in the Despatch of 1854, that European knowledge should gradually be brought, by means of the Indian Vernaculars, within the reach of all classes of the people."[74]

Let us now proceed with our account of the University and the Vernaculars. We have seen that from 1863 onwards Vernaculars had no place in the University. In 1900-01 a scheme for the introduction of three of the Vernaculars of the Presidency, Marathi, Gujrati and Canarese, into the M.A. curriculum, was passed by the Senate of the University. And the next step was taken in 1918 when Marathi, Gujrati, Canarese and Urdu were included among the optional languages which the candidates may select for the B.A. pass examination. But the most important step has yet to be taken and that is the option for Matriculation candidates to write the non-English question papers in the Vernacular. When that is done the University will have done its duty towards the students and the community by paving the way for that supreme consummation for which it was created—the ultimate uplift of the Vernaculars, so that by their means the European knowledge may be brought within the reach of all classes. Till then we may say that the University has failed in the only thing for which it exists.

During the last few years repeated efforts have been made by a section of the Senate to move the University to bring about this reform. The efforts have proved a failure till now. We have not the least doubt that the conservative attitude of the University in this respect is making a last stand only to give way to forces which are daily growing stronger and stronger.

Efforts of the Department of Public Instruction to carry out the wishes of the Despatch are as barren as those of the University. But in this field of enquiry we meet with a few bright spots. In the first place, the Department was much handicapped in its efforts to support the cause of the Vernacular against the powerful opposition of the University. Mr. Peile, the Director, who succeeded Sir Alexander Grant, was keenly conscious of the defective system of schooling that prevailed around him—a system which had no definite place for the Vernacular in its curricula. He tried his best to raise the standard of the Vernacular study in the English schools which were under his jurisdiction. At one time he went so far as to insist upon the candidates, who prepared for the Matriculation, to study Vernacular even though it was not necessary for the Matriculation examination. Of course he could make that condition apply to Government Schools only, for they alone were directly under his control. But he had to yield in

74. Indian Education Policy, 1904, pp. 25-27.

the end to the exigencies of the time, for, the requirement placed the Government School scholars under disadvantage, compared with those of the aided schools, in the Matriculation. But his attempt shows his wish and we cannot but give him the credit that was his. He made successive representations to the University asking for at least the minimum recognition of the Vernaculars—a passage for translation in the English paper. But the University did not deign to consider his request.

In 1912 or thereabout the Department rendered a unique service to the cause of the Vernaculars when it gave option to the candidates for the School Final Examination (a Departmental examination for admission to Government Service) to answer the questions in history, geography and classical language in the Vernacular. This unique experiment continued till 1917-18 when the School Final Examination was merged into the Matriculation and both were handed over to a 'Joint Examination Board'. The School Final Examination was only a minor examination carried on a small scale compared with the Matriculation. But the subjects of examination were almost the same for both, and the experiment has proved that nothing but good can come by allowing the same option in the Matriculation.

Two points have been brought to light by this Departmental experiment ; firstly, the questions are better answered in the Vernacular than in English :[75] and secondly it has shattered to pieces the bug-bear that 'English' would suffer if the 'non-English' subjects were allowed to be taught or answered in the Vernacular.

"The argument that English is bound to suffer under the proposed change scarcely requires refutation. The Director of Public Instruction, in his speech during the debate (in the Senate meeting), made it amply clear that no such consequences would follow. He was able to speak from experience of the School Final Examination, where latterly Government had tried the experiment and found it successful."[76]

Now let us see what the Department of Public Instruction did to hinder the progress of the Vernacular and its being made a medium in the higher branches of learning. We have already seen that before the Department of Public Instruction took charge of the schools, in Bombay, the difference between the English and the Vernacular schools was very small in point of matter of instruction except in that of English language which was taught in the English schools only. The fact was so obvious that in the first Report of the Director, we find :

"The studies in these (Vernacular) schools differ from those of the English schools chiefly, if not wholly, in the fact that everything is

---

75. Report of the D.P.I., Bombay, for 1912-17, p. 42.
76. Dr. P. D. Gune's letter printed in *The Collegian* (Calcutta), Vol. XVIII, No. 8. (Oct. 1922), p. 265.

taught in them through the medium of the Vernacular."[77] A testimony to the popularity of these subjects, which included Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Astronomy, Indian and English History and Natural Philosophy, Ancient History, etc., is supplied by the Director himself when he added: "those schools are best attended where instruction is of the highest standard and most nearly approaching European character".

Thus in Bombay what the Despatch of 1854 wanted to have, viz. the elimination of the difference between the quality and quantity of instruction in the English and the Vernacular schools, already existed thanks to the far-sighted policy of the early educators. But instead of bringing the then existing state of things more and more in accordance with the wishes of the Despatch, the Bombay Educational Department, within a couple of years, proceeded to undo the work which was the product of a quarter of a century. In 1857, the Director divided the schools of the Presidency into three classes: (i) High Schools, (ii) Anglo-Vernacular schools, and (iii) Vernacular Schools. Now this was exactly what the Court of Directors objected to. They had written in the Despatch: "we are unwilling to maintain the broad line of separation which at present exists between schools in which the media for imparting instruction differ". But here in 1857, the Department introduced a distinction exclusively based on the difference of the media of instruction; for, in the High Schools the medium was to be exclusively English, in the Anglo-Vernacular, it was to be both English and the Vernacular and in the Vernacular, exclusively Vernacular. This was the beginning of the fall of the Vernaculars which was only made complete by the action of the University in 1863. The three grades of schools were not only separated on the basis of the medium of instruction, but they were made the succeeding steps of the educational ladder by which a pupil was to reach the University. Or, in other words, each school taught a fraction of the school course which ultimately ended in the Matriculation. The Vernacular schools being placed at the bottom, it naturally followed that the instruction in them was to be the most rudimentary. To this irresistible conclusion the Director was driven by the very act of the new division of schools; for, in the very year he wrote:

"The time seems past for offering a high course of instruction exclusively through the Vernacular."[78]

This was indeed the direct frustration of the hope expressed by the Despatch that as 'the gradual enrichment of the Vernacular languages in works of education' advanced, the Vernacular languages should be allowed to 'impart a superior education'. If the superior education

77. Report of the D.P.I., Bombay, for 1855-56, p. 91.
78. Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay, for 1856-57, p. 70.

that was being already imparted was to be driven out of the Vernacular schools, what hope was there for its future improvement ?

The new classification of schools introduced by the Director was gradually making it more and more difficult for the Vernacular schools to keep up the standard of instruction as high as it was before. The final elimination of all the subjects except the most rudimentary ones was effected in 1862-63, the very year when the University drove the Vernaculars from its courses.

The final work was completed in 1865-66, when in consequence of the introduction of 'the payment by results' system of Grant-in-aid, the standards of the Vernacular schools were definitely fixed. They comprised, arithmetic, writing and reading and grammar. The whole course was to be covered during four years. Thus from 1865 the Vernacular schools became merely the agencies of imparting instruction in the three R's literally.

During the succeeding years the fatal mistake of reducing all instruction in the Vernacular schools to these three R's was realised by the Department and efforts were made to raise it a little higher and extend it to three more years. Thus, however imperfect the existing Vernacular standards in Bombay may be compared with those of the pre-Departmental days, it must be admitted that the present Vernacular instruction in Bombay is superior to that given in other provinces of India.

The Indian Education Commission of 1882 found it distinctly to be so.[79] The credit of this slightly advanced state of Bombay Vernacular education is no doubt due to the highly developed state of Vernacular schools before the Department came to blast it with its rigid classification. In reviewing the history of the Vernacular text-books in Bombay, Mr. J. G. Covernton wrote in 1906 :

"It is clear therefore that the present comparatively advanced vernacular curriculum of Bombay is no new thing but a growth of years and in accordance with the traditions of the past."[80]

In English or Secondary Schools the Department left no option to the teachers as to the medium of instruction from the beginning of its career. It was prescribed that all subjects in the High School course should be taught in English. The University sealed the Departmental order by requiring all question papers to be answered in English.

In 1904, however, a change came over the Departmental attitude towards the importance of the Vernacular. In the School Final

79. Report, pp. 121-22.
80. Vernacular Reading books in the Bombay Presidency (1906). Occasional Reports No. 2, Publications of the Bureau of Education, India.

Examination which came into the hands of the Department from 1906 increasing importance was given to the Vernaculars. In 1914, in the new curriculum sanctioned for the English schools, the Department slackened its requirements and option was given to use the Vernaculars in the High School standards in some of the non-English subjects. This was indeed a great favour ; as, in doing so, the Department struck out a path which was quite contrary to its own past traditions. But the hold of the University over the Matriculation was too tight to allow this option being made of any real use to the scholars or to the schools. Referring to this option and its action on the High Schools the Director wrote : " The head masters welcome the change in so far as it affected the work in the lower high school standards. As regards the higher standards VI and VII, however, opinion seems to incline in favour of the retention of English as the medium of instruction, especially in view of the University Matriculation Examination at which the Vernacular is not recognised as an alternative medium of expression."

MASS EDUCATION IN INDIA

I. THE PROBLEM STATED

In March 1932 there were 11,40,000 pupils in the *primary* schools of the British districts of the Bombay Presidency. The population of these districts according to the census of 1931 is 2,18,00,000. This means that out of every hundred persons in the Presidency, about 5.2 attended primary schools of all kinds. It is generally accepted that about 14% of the population, which represents children between 6 to 11 years of age, ought to be in the primary schools. Out of 100 children of primary school age about 37 attend primary schools; or, roughly speaking, for every child who attends a primary school today, there are two who do not. The available provision for primary instruction must therefore be nearly trebled in order to take in all the children of primary school age.

The gravity of the problem will be better realized if the figures of expenditure are considered. The total expenditure from all sources on primary schools in the British districts of the Bombay Presidency in the year 1931-32 was about Rs. 2,05,00,000. The Government contribution from the Provincial Revenue was Rs. 1,18,00,000, which represents roughly 58 per cent of the total expenditure on primary education. The Municipalities and Local Boards contributed from their own resources about Rs. 64,00,000, i.e. about 31 per cent. The rest, about Rs. 23,00,000, i.e. about 11 per cent was contributed from fees and other sources. The total number of pupils under instruction in the year 1931-32 was 11,40,000. The cost per pupil, therefore, came to Rs. 18. Out of this, Rs. 10-7 were borne by Government, Rs. 5-9 by Municipalities and Local Boards and the rest, Rs. 2 came from fees and other sources. The total number of children to be provided for in primary schools will be 14 per cent of the population. This comes to 30,52.000, i.e. ($21800000 \times \frac{14}{100}$) children. Taking the cost of educating each child at Rs. 18 per year, the total expenditure on primary education from all sources in a scheme of universal compulsory education would come to Rs. 5,50,00,000.

If the rates of contribution from the various sources are maintained at the present level, the following will be the distribution :

	Rs.
Government (Provincial Revenue)	320,00,000
Municipalities & Local Boards	170,00,000
Fees and Other Sources	60,00,000
Total Rs.	550,00,000

The seriousness and magnitude of the problem of making primary education compulsory will, it is hoped, be realized by those who carefully consider the above figures. It may be pointed out in passing that the whole of British India spent in 1927 about 9 crores of rupees on primary education from all sources. Bombay alone will have to spend 5½ crores, for a scheme of universal primary education, if such a one is contemplated in the near future on the present basis.

The object of presenting the above statistics of a complete scheme of primary education for this Presidency is, to show that, if at all we are serious about meeting our obligation to the children so far as primary education is concerned, we must immediately devise some method, some means or some policy of a wide extension of primary education *within the possible resources at our disposal.* It will not help us to wait and see if by some providential dispensation more money would be forthcoming so that we could spend more for primary education. It is feared that, owing to the present world-wide depression and the parlous state of the finances of the Bombay Government, the resources at their disposal are not likely to permit them to spend more every year on primary education. The ten years' programme chalked out by the Chandavarkar Committee on Compulsory Primary Education in 1922, on whose recommendations the Bombay Primary Education Act of 1923 was based, wanted the Government of Bombay to spend on primary education Rs. 123 lacs in 1921-22, raising the expenditure in 10 years, i.e. in 1931-32 to 2 crores. The figures of actual expenditure are: in 1921-22 one crore, and in 1931-32 Rs. 118 lacs. The same Committee wanted the Municipalities and Local Boards to spend Rs. 23 lacs in 1921-22 and Rs. 56 lacs in 1931-32. The actual expenditure by these bodies stood at 23 lacs in 1921-22, and at 64 lacs in 1931-32. It is of interest to note that while the Local Bodies have exceeded the expectations of the Committee, Government have spent in 1932 five lacs less than what was projected for the year 1922. Coming to the figures of pupils in primary schools, we find that while the Committee wanted within a period of 10 years (1922-32) the number to rise from about 7½ lacs to about 14½ lacs, the actual rise was from about 8 lacs to 11½ lacs. To an optimist, it would appear at first that the labour of the Committee and the Compulsory Primary Education Act have at least resulted in a gain of 3½ lacs in the number of children; but it is feared that the optimist will have to be disappointed. For, during the preceding 10 years, 1912-22, under normal years of expansion, the number of pupils in primary schools rose from 5,20,000 to 8,60,000, i.e. by 3,40,000. The irresistible conclusion therefore is, that the working of the Compulsory Primary Education Act and the talks about compulsion have not been of any special assistance to the Province as a whole when the number of pupils under instruction is taken into consideration.

This, then, is the situation. We have in our primary schools 11,40,000 pupils, and we have yet to bring in an additional number of about 19 lacs. The helplessness of Government resources to encourage expansion is now too well known to be commented upon. The finances of the Municipalities and Local Boards are not very prosperous either, and private individuals and societies are not able to expand their activities, firstly because the help that they receive from public funds is inadequate and secondly because they cannot compete with the schools maintained out of public funds. Under these depressing circumstances, it behoves us all who have faith in education as a powerful instrument of national uplift to take stock of our resources and of our needs and then so to adjust the two as would, in the near future, enable us to achieve our object of a very wide expansion of primary education amongst the masses. Left to themselves, the masses would not be anxious for education, for as Lecky has aptly observed, "Education in its simplest form, which is one of the first and highest human interests, is a matter in which Government initiation and direction are emphatically required, for uninstructed people will never demand it, and to appreciate Education is itself a consequence of Education".

The Indian nation must some day progress towards self-government through the collective will of its people. It must, therefore, for its very existence, make a supreme effort in the shortest possible time, to remove the blot of illiteracy which will otherwise endanger the very form of government which it is trying so hard to secure. The writer of the *Progress of Education in India*, 1922-27, rightly observes: "An illiterate democracy is a danger not only to itself, but to the world; the higher the degree of literacy that is attained by the people, the greater the possibility of government by the people being conducted on foundations of right, justice and truth. The essential force, therefore, of educational efforts in India, should be directed towards breaking down of illiteracy of the masses."[1] The Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay (1922-27, p. 94), contains similar observations. It says: "the first essential for anything in the nature of democratic government in India is a literate electorate. The cultivators are the backbone of the country and it is right that they should have a voice in the Government, but they should at least be literate if they are to take an intelligent interest in political questions".

The importance of a scheme of compulsory primary education for the nation which wants to make itself 'literate', needs no emphasis. For, that is the only means by which this object can ever be achieved. Literacy is the natural consequence of primary education and the greater the spread of primary education, the greater would be the literacy.

1. Report, Vol. I, p. 123.

Let us see where we stand and how fast we are advancing in the matter of literacy. According to the latest census of India (1931), out of every hundred persons (males and females) about 8 are able to read and write. This means that our literacy is 8%. According to the Hartog Committee's Report (p. 45), between 1892 and 1922, a period of 30 years or one generation, the percentage of literacy among males increased from 13 to 14.4 and among females from 0.7 to 2. Taking males and females together it may be said to have gone up from 7 per cent to 8 per cent at which it stands in 1931. It will not be out of place here to point out that in 1836, nearly a hundred years ago, one Mr. Adam who was deputed by the Government to make special enquiries into the state of education of that time made an intensive survey in the city of Murshidabad and one *thana* in each of the five districts of Bengal and Bihar. He found that of the total population surveyed by him consisting of 4,97,334 persons (all ages), 81,629 were children of ages 5 to 14, and 3,55,099 were persons of ages 14 and above. Of children of 5 to 14 years of age, 6,786 were receiving either domestic or school instruction and 21,916 of the adult population were 'instructed'. We thus see that 5.8 per cent of the total population (including children of ages 0 to 5) were 'literate,' while the percentage of population of ages 5 and above which was literate was 6.5. Corresponding figures of literacy yielded by the 1931 census of India are 8 and 9.5 respectively.[2]

Those who care to study the report of Mr. Adam will not fail to be convinced of the reasonable accuracy of his figures. That the figures for Bombay could not have been behind the Bengal figures, would be seen from the fact that in about 1842, the Report of the Board of Education, Bombay, gave statistics which showed that the percentage of population under instruction to the total population in Bombay, was almost equal to that of Bengal as ascertained by Mr. Adam. Assuming, therefore, that the figures given by Mr. Adam did represent to a reasonable degree of accuracy the actual state of things, and assuming further that the conditions in India in general were not far behind those in Bengal, it may be said that within a space of 100 years, literacy in India has gone up by about 2 per cent (from 6 to 8) only, in spite of all the efforts that have been made and all the money that has been spent for the educational unlift of the masses. The state of things thus revealed is simply staggering. There is something wrong somewhere, no matter what it is. The malady is too chronic and a remedy must be found even if it may go counter to the accepted notions of educational advancement. Pious resolutions and hopeful speeches, and the analogies of *present day* conditions in foreign countries

2. The percentage of literates amongst adults only, i.e. amongst persons of age 14 and above according to statistics collected by Adam was about 6 in 1836; today it is about 10.

will not help us in the least. England, Germany, Japan and some other countries who stand ahead in the list of civilized nations today have attained by their efforts a stage of education where the percentage of literacy is between 90 and 100; or, in other words, their percentage of literacy is our percentage of illiteracy. Students of Education are apt to find many good things in the educational systems of these advanced countries which are held up for admiration and guidance of the Indian people. That is all well and good. But a peep into the past of these very countries when they themselves were at the threshold of educational advancement of the masses, will show us something that we may make use of, something that will help us in our infant stage of mass education. The history of the movements affecting the welfare of the masses of one country can profitably supply lessons for guidance to the people of other countries. It will, therefore, be one of the main objects of this paper to draw upon the experiences and methods of countries like England, Germany and Japan, when they themselves were at a stage of educational advancement not far from where we are today.

II. COMPARATIVELY HIGH COST OF THE BOMBAY SYSTEM

The provinces of Bengal, Madras and Bombay were the first to come under British Rule and to receive attention from Government in the extension of primary education. The result of the systems prevailing in these provinces is, that in 1927, out of every 100 boys and girls who ought to be in primary schools, there were in Madras 38, in Bombay 33, and in Bengal 29. Out of every 100 primary schools in these provinces, the number of privately managed schools is about 70 in Madras, 25 in Bombay and 90 in Bengal. Whatever may be said of the efficiency of a publicly managed school compared with that of a privately managed one, it will be admitted that a public institution costs far more to the public funds than a private institution.

The result of the Bombay policy is that the expenditure on Primary Education from the public funds is very high compared to that of the other two Provinces. The average cost per pupil in primary schools in these Provinces in 1930 was as follows :

Cost per Pupil

Province		*Total Cost*	*Cost of Govt., i.e. to Provincial Revenues*
		Rs.	Rs.
Madras	..	8.6	4.9
Bombay	..	18.11	11.11
Bengal	..	4.4	1.5

It may be asked: have we got any substantial return out of having the costliest system as compared with the other two Provinces? The wastage in primary schools is smaller in Bombay than in any other Province; and it is said that the general efficiency of the Bombay primary schools is greater than that of many other provinces. But so far as reaching the masses is concerned, the Bombay system is behind Madras and only a little ahead of Bengal.

The peculiarity of the Bombay system of primary education, viz. its reliance almost exclusively on public agencies, is not the result of an accident or of a want of a policy in educational administration. The Bombay system is the result of a deliberate policy of the Educational Department whose deep-rooted antipathy *in the past* to private enterprise in education is writ large on the annals of its administration. In 1882, the late Mr. Justice Ranade wrote as follows on this very important aspect of the Bombay system: "The subject of indigenous education may safely be said to be the weakest point in the policy adopted by the officers charged with the spread of education in this Presidency. While everywhere else in India, the most strenuous efforts have been made to secure the co-operation of the people in this connection, the ruling principle with the Bombay officers has been to cry down the indigenous systems, and insist upon the claim of the Department to have an exclusive monopoly of Primary Education throughout the Presidency. The result is that Bombay stands alone in having the largest number of Government Primary Schools, and the smallest number of primary aided schools. This difference is not one of names, but represents a waste of energy and of money which, if it could be saved by anything that we can here urge, would be a most important departure from the previous traditions, and would further remove to a great extent the difficulty of funds, which is at present pleaded as a reason why primary education is comparatively at a standstill." [3]

It is no use quarrelling with the past. If what the late Justice Ranade observed in 1882, had been acted upon in Bombay, there is no doubt that by now Bombay would have been able to accommodate in its primary schools a far large number of pupils and the whole question of mass education and literacy would have been placed on an entirely different footing.

III. A SCHEME OF MASS EDUCATION

(A) General Observations

It is not the purpose of this paper to decry the present system and to stop at that. Further, it is not proposed to find fault with the Government and the Local Bodies for their inability to spend

3. *Miscellaneous Writings*, pp. 260-61.

more money on primary education. It is not also proposed to recommend that teachers' salaries should be reduced and the saving thus effected utilized for expansion of primary education.

The object of this paper is to offer suggestions which, if approved and adopted by those who are responsible for the administration of primary education of this Presidency, will help to solve to a great extent the problem of mass education and the consequent liquidation of illiteracy. In offering these suggestions an attempt will be made to show that they are not merely the figments of the writer's imagination but are broad-based on the actual experience of other countries.

The expansion of primary education has been too slow to have any appreciable effect on the masses. During the last 30 years (1902-1932), the percentage of pupils attending primary schools in this Presidency to the total population has gone up from 2.5 to 5 (roughly). If the same rate of expansion is maintained in the next generation (1932-62), the figure will go up to about 10, and somewhere within the next generation (1962-92), we may be able to bring into our schools all the children who ought to be there. This is, however, a very optimistic view. If the rate of expansion of the last decade is taken into consideration, the picture appears to be very gloomy. In 1922, the figure stood at 4.8 and in 1932 at 5.2. The rate of expansion is 10% and these were the years of transfer of education to the popular control when compulsion was in the air and in some places actually introduced. Not less than a century will suffice to take us to the goal at the rate of expansion of the last decade. Prophecies are, of course, dangerous, but it may be stated that even a generation is too long a period to be allowed for the spread of education amongst the masses for a country which aspires to be ruled by the will of its people. In England compulsion was introduced for the first time in 1872. Before that, it may be noted, primary education was entirely in the hands of private agencies, the State only giving help by way of grants since 1833. In 1872, School Boards were established and a very rapid programme of expansion of primary education was taken up. In 1872, the percentage of population in schools to the total population was about 8 (in Bombay, today, it is about 5). Within a decade it rose to 15 which meant that nearly all the children of the nation received primary instruction.

The fear of 'wastage' and stagnation need not deter us from a policy of rapid expansion of primary education at this important stage of our national evolution. The Hartog Committee's Report (p. 48) has discussed at length the question of wastage and stagnation resulting in ill-directed expenditure and has expressed the opinion that improvement in this respect should precede expansion (p. 71). With due deference to the Committee, it may be pointed out that in the infant stage of the expansion of mass education such wastage can

never be totally eliminated. Wastage is organically connected with compulsion, and if efforts are made to prevent wastage by withholding the remedy of compulsion the result will be the stopping of expansion. The complaint made is that out of 100 children that attend the first standard (in Bombay, the Infant standard), only about 20 reach the fourth standard. It is usually assumed that a child does not become literate unless he completes the fourth primary standard and therefore if he leaves earlier the money spent on him is practically wasted. This is a one-sided view of the question. In the early stages of the educational advancement of a poor country like ours, the other view of the problem cannot be ignored. This view is ably presented by the writer of the *Progress of Education in India, 1922-27* (p. 125) : "We may however look at the question of Primary Education not only from the standpoint of the breaking down of illiteracy but from the point of view that it is all to the advantage of the State for a child to receive some education no matter how little that education is, that it is better for him to have read for four years than for three years, for three years than for two years, for two years than for one year, and for one year than not at all. Something may be carried away by the boy from the school if he leaves before reaching the fourth class and that something will diminish the time which he may have to spend in a Night School or in a continuation school if he sets out to achieve literacy after the end of his day school career."

The most important task in the initial stages of a nation's educational advancement is to accustom the children of the poor to school life. Parents have to be accustomed to send their children to schools. In the next generation the imperfectly schooled parents would take greater care to see that their children attend more regularly. Anyhow to stop the rapid expansion of primary education through the fear of some wastage in a country like ours where the percentage of literacy is not even 10, is to go against the best interests of the nation. That England itself had to pass through such a period of waste and to go ahead with expansion of primary education undeterred by the problem of wastage may be seen from the following extracts taken from the *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, Vol. II (1898), Department of Education, England, p. 451. They refer to the year 1870 when the expansion of primary education had already exceeded that in Bombay today. In 1870 the percentage of children in schools to the total population of England was above 7. In Bombay it is not even 6.

An Inspector of Schools writes in 1870 : "No one who has not had practical experience of it can have any idea of the immense waste of power and energy, not to say money, which irregular attendance produces, or of the small number of those children who reach the 'moderate' highest standard under the present system."

"But of all the drawbacks irregularity of attendance continues to be one of the most prominent, whether in country places or in such towns as it has fallen to my lot to visit."

The Report further adds: "that the education given in 1869 was not satisfactory may be seen from the following extract from the Committee of Council's Report for 1869-70. After producing figures in reference to the number presented for examination in the different standards, the Report goes on to say 'such results, we must repeat, cannot be accepted as satisfactory. They show that out of every 1,000 children in our schools qualified by age and attendance only 98 were presented in the two higher standards in place of 319 who ought to have been prepared to pass such an examination at the close of what must be to them the brief period of their school life'."

It may also be further noted that in 1883 (10 years after compulsion was allowed to be introduced in England) in the London Board Schools the following percentage of pupils was observed in each standard:

Below Standard I	25
Standard I	22
Standard II	17
Standard III	14
Standard IV	11
Above Standard IV	11
	100

In Bombay in 1932 the percentage for boys' schools stood as follows:

Infant Standard	32.9
Standard I	17.5
Standard II	15.5
Standard III	12.6
Standard IV	10.9
Above Std. IV	10.6
	100.00

This is not a discouraging state of things compared with the state of education in London when primary education in England was almost universal.

It may be of interest to point out here also that the average attendance in English primary schools was only 68 per cent in 1871 and was 82 per cent in 1895.

(B) Suggestions for Reform

(1) The five-year course of primary education covering the Infant and Stds. I-IV should be reduced to one of four years of Stds. I to IV:

Upto 1887 the course of primary instruction in Bombay had no infant standard. There were Stds. I-IV and V-VI. It appears that the object of styling the new standard as 'Infant' was to make its teaching distinctly different from that of the other standards. It was to be more lively and less restricted to the usual routine methods. However laudable the object might have been in the past, it is not now necessary to make the lowest standard of the primary school a distinct standard fit for infants. For, in a scheme of compulsory primary education every seat in the school counts; and for the economy of funds it is necessary to restrict the course to as few years as possible. In some provinces of India the primary course covers only four years and even the Hartog Committee admits that a minimum course of four years would be sufficient for ensuring literacy in the pupil who attends such a course. In the provinces of Bengal, the Punjab and the Central Provinces the compulsory primary course is confined to the first four years only. Japan had a four years' compulsory primary education course till about 1907.

Apart from its adequacy for the very modest educational needs of the people of this poor country, the reduction of the five years' course to one of four for purposes of compulsory education will result in a saving which can be used with advantage for the expansion of primary education. Theoretically, the new programme of four years' course will result in a saving of about one-fifth of the expenditure that is now being incurred on the five years' course. The actual saving may be smaller; but there is no doubt that the saving will be substantial which could be utilized for further expansion.

It may be stated that considering the enormous strides which we have to make in the field of primary education for the masses and the very restricted means at our disposal, the writer feels that to begin with, even a three years' course would be adequate. From five years to three years is, however, a big jump and in order to avoid controversies, a four years' primary course for compulsion is recommended as an immediate measure of reform, in the interest of the expansion of primary education amongst the masses. This suggestion had been regarded as being feasible by the Primary and Secondary Education Committee of the Government of Bombay who in their Report (1929) admit the possibility of finishing the present five years' course in four years.

(2) Change of the compulsory age period from 6-11 to 7-11:

Under the Primary Education Act of 1923, compulsion is to be enforced as soon as a child is six years old wherever such compulsion

is introduced. To expect a child to attend a primary school at the age of six is desirable, and many advanced countries of the world have fixed six years as the lower limit of compulsory age. The following is a list of countries with the age limits for compulsory primary education:

	Year	*Period of Compulsion*
England	1870	5–10
,,	1893	5–11
,,	1899	5–12
,,	1911	5–14 (13–14 permissible).
,,	1918	6–14 (5–6 & 14–16 permissible).
France		6–13
Germany		6–14
Italy		6–14
Belgium		6–14
Sweden		7–14
Norway		7–14 (7-14 town & 8-15 country).
Denmark		7–14
Russia		8–12

	Age limits	*No. of States*
U.S.A	6–16 to 18	2
	7–14 to 18	28
	8–14 to 18	18
	9–15	1
		49

		No. of Provinces
Canada	7–12	3
	8–13 or 14	2
Brazil	7–13	—
South Africa	7–15	1
	7–16	3
Australia	6–14	4
	7–13	3

The above list will show that highly industrialised countries have fixed the lower limit of compulsory age at 6, while most of the agricultural countries as well as countries which are just developing or which have a scattered population have fixed the lower limit at 7 or above. In some of the latter countries a further latitude is given to country population where the distance to be travelled by a child is greater.

What then should be the lower limit of compulsory age for us? Should we follow the highly advanced countries or those who, being above us, are at a level which may be reached by us sooner or later?

A period of four years of compulsory education is, no doubt, a short one and if we look at the figures given above it is more necessary to raise the higher limit as early as possible, for the greater the time a child spends in a school after he is able to master the tools of know-

ledge—reading and writing—the more does he profit, and the better fitted is he for adult life.

It is no doubt desirable to have very young children at school, provided arrangements could be made to give them a happy and homely surrounding in school. But a country like India is not in a position to have this ideal fulfilled for many years to come. Our aim at present should be to economise our resources to the highest possible extent and secure the greatest good of the greatest number within the available means. Those who are placed in the fortunate circumstance of being able to spend liberally for their very young children may do so. The scheme that is here propounded is for all—the rich if they care to use it and the poor who must avail themselves of it.

England began with admitting children of 3 years and upwards in its schools. Gradually, however, it found that the national resources could not bear this strain. As a result, children under five, the lower limit of compulsion, were allowed to be refused admission at the option of the Local Bodies. The Education Act of 1918 went further and sought to exclude children between 5-6 at the option of the Local Authorities in order to utilise the resources thus released to keep in schools pupils from 14 to 16; for, experience all over the world shows that the higher the age limit of leaving the school, the more good does it do to the pupil.

In enforcing compulsion there are certain principles to be observed in order to facilitate the proper working of compulsion.

Firstly, it is unwise to rule that a child must be sent to school on the day he is six years of age. The school term or terms must be fixed and the attendance must be made compulsory from the first or second term of the school year, according as the child has attained the prescribed age limit before or after the commencement of the first or second term. This means that the admissions to the lowest standard of primary schools have to be restricted at the beginning of a term or terms of the school year. Such restriction is absolutely necessary in a scheme of compulsory education and all countries which have introduced compulsion have done so. Failure to do this results in a huge waste of national resources. Suppose a child attends the lowest standard in December and the school year begins from June. From December to June the child attends the school, but in the class he is not able to pick up much, because the rest of the children of his class who began their instruction in June are far advanced in their studies, and the class teacher is not able to devote special attention to the child who joins late. The result in the majority of such cases is that the child has to be in the same standard from June next for one year. His attendance from December to June has not helped him in any way; but he has put the school to unnecessary expense for his six

months' attendance. This is a case of a single child taken for illustration. But when thousands or even lacs of such cases occur, and they are bound to occur unless the admissions are restricted to the beginning of a term or year, the waste of public money is too large to be neglected. The Primary and Secondary Education Committee of the Government of Bombay have made this recommendation in their Report and the sooner legislation is enacted in this matter the better it would be for all concerned. Local difficulties will have to be met by concessions made locally.

When once the lower age limit for compulsion is fixed it is necessary to lay it down that children below that age shall not be admitted to public primary schools. In Japan where the lower age limit is 6, 'to prevent over-enthusiastic parents from making their children commence their education at too early an age', it has been laid down that no pupil is to be admitted to an Elementary School who is under 6 years of age.[4] In Switzerland (1905) children under six were not admitted to the primary schools. It seems harsh, no doubt, to refuse admission to a child coming to the door of the school seeking admission. But when the good of the nation demands such action it has to be enforced. In the Bombay Presidency there are more than a lac of children of an age below 6 in schools. They absorb about one-tenth of the expenditure on primary education. If these children are kept waiting for a year only, it would be possible to make room for 100,000 more children of age six and above. Such children have a greater claim on the public funds and the money spent on them would be better spent.

(3) The Curriculum of Primary Schools should be very much simplified and text-books should be revised so as to make them simple and more easily understood by the children of the masses:

Simplification of the curriculum means concentrating on the three R's and giving up all other subjects such as grammar, history, geography, object lessons, drawing, nature study, etc. We are so much accustomed to the idea of including these subjects in the primary school course that such a suggestion would appear to be ridiculous. It is asked, what then is to be taught in these schools? Is it enough if a child is taught reading, writing and arithmetic? Our answer is, Yes; we want to concentrate on essentials only in our primary schools, leaving the non-essentials to the future or to privately managed institutions. This is the supreme need of the time and the necessary action to reduce the curriculum to the minimum must be courageously and immediately taken. All the time of the pupils in our primary schools and all the time and energy of the teacher must be utilised for essentials until such time as would enable us to bring in all the children of school-going age to schools. As has

4. Syed Ross Masood: *Japan & Its Educational System*, 1923, pp. 216-17.

already been stated, the children of the well-to-do may learn all these subjects and even more in private schools which cater for the wants of such people. And if more such schools are required they will surely be opened as soon as the demand for them is felt. But the simplified primary school curriculum that is being contemplated here is for all the children of the soil, the rich as well as the poor and more the poor than the rich. In the past the standards were set up with a view to meeting the wishes of the well-to-do. Now they must be made to conform to the needs of the masses.

Too much is made of subjects such as history, geography, drawing, object lessons, grammar, nature-study, etc. A good deal of time is spent over these subjects which can be far better utilised for reading and writing. What after all is the use of these subjects when compared with the use of the great tools of knowledge, reading and writing? Take an ordinary boy who has completed the fourth standard in an ordinary primary school. He has read the first four departmental books. If he is industrious, perhaps the same book many times. The total amount of literature read by him is indeed very meagre. The poetry lessons with the intricacies of paraphrase and meaning absorb a good deal of time. Then comes the recitation of poetry 'read and understood'. This again he has to cram, whether he understands it or not. As to grammar and parsing, the less said of it the better. It is a relic of the past which ought to go from the primary course with the least possible delay. History and geography, if intelligently taught, are delightful subjects, especially the latter. But the manner in which they are handled with the help of printed books coupled with cramming, being neither delight to the child nor are they a source of the so-called 'culture'. Moreover, when history and geography are put down as separate class subjects, they become a source of waste of precious school time. They ought to form a part of the language lessons, if at all they are considered so valuable as to be retained in the compulsory primary school curriculum. The so-called object lessons need not form a part of the simple curriculum that is being aimed at. In arithmetic also there is a good deal that may be profitably given up in order to simplify the curriculum and concentrate on reading and writing. In a simple scheme of a compulsory primary course of 4 years, what is required is to provide the boy with a lot of simple literature. Instead of one text-book (only about half of it is read in the year) let him read 10 simple books. Cheap juvenile literature suited to the capacity of every child of school age is now being produced on an increasing scale. It is indeed unwise to ask a child in a village in the heart of the Deccan and one who is in a remote corner of the Konkan to read the same book. The surroundings are different, and possibly there is a lot of difference in the traditional upbringing of the two children. There may be some difference in the diction with which each of the two may be familiar. Books—cheap,

simple, and suited to the surroundings of small geographical units rather than the whole of a linguistic area are needed. The present vernacular text-books (at least in Marathi) were written in 1908 or so. Nearly a quarter of a century has passed and they have not been changed. The Government monopoly of cheap text-books was, no doubt, a useful means of securing uniformity of instruction in the past; it might have also helped the poor parents to save a few annas by reason of their cheapness. But they have now outlived their utility. The Chandavarkar Committee (1922) had recommended (p. 48) "that the curriculum should be modified and simplified where necessary so as to bring it into close relation with the pupil's environment. The vernacular readers should be revised in respect of language and matter as far as may be found necessary". This was nearly 10 years ago. About 3 or 4 years ago the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, Bombay (1929), repeated the same advice. No action has, however, so far been taken. Let us hope this will not remain unattended to any longer.

The teaching of *Modi* in Marathi schools requires some comment. At present, time is spent in *writing and reading* Modi from the first to the fourth standard. This is the burden which can be removed without any loss to the child. *Modi* is the script writing of the Marathi language. No doubt, there was a time and that too not at a distant date, when a knowledge of *Modi* was essential to a Marathi pupil. But the times are vastly changed. And the day is not distant when *Modi* will altogether disappear from ordinary correspondence. To be able to *read Modi* may remain a necessity for some time; but to write *Modi* is not a necessity even today. *Modi*, therefore, ought to be removed from the simple course of primary curriculum. At the most, in the last year of the course and that too for some time, the pupil may be made to read a book or two in *Modi*. There is no objection to continuing *Modi* in the higher primary standards to meet the want of a few *Modi* knowing clerks that may be required for some time to serve as writers in *pedhis* and Government *kacheris*.

The subjects prescribed today for the Primary Curriculum (upto the fourth standard) consist of the three R's and six others, viz. History, Geography, Grammar, Object Lessons, Drawing and Nature Study. Those of us who are brought up in the system of education of which these subjects are a part, are very unwilling to say that they should have no place in the simple Primary School course. It is not our intention to say that these subjects have no value, nor is it maintained that they do not deserve a place in any scheme of primary education. This must be made clear to avoid misunderstanding. All these subjects have a value, and not a small value, in the education of a boy or a girl. What is implied in the suggestion for their removal is this: they ought not to have a place in the simple course which a poor nation like India can reasonably afford to give to all its children, especially the children of the

poor and uninstructed masses. In fact, countries far more prosperous and advanced than India had to do away with them for many years, in their own initial stages of mass education. They might have been taught in schools for the children of the well-to-do; but in schools for the children of the masses they were scarcely included among the obligatory subjects.

Let us turn to the elementary schools of England. In 1862 the first Education Code saw the light of the day. The subjects prescribed therein for standards I to IV of the elementary schools consisted of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic only. (Needle-work was prescribed for girls.) Of course, as in our schools, the subjects were divided into four parts according to standards of increasing difficulty. If we confine ourselves to the first four standards of the English elementary schools of those days, we see that in 1868 Geography, History and Grammar were prescribed as "optional" subjects for the IV standard with the proviso that one or two of these three might be taught in the IV standard only. In 1875 they were still "optional", but not more than two were to be taught to standards I and upwards. In 1882, Object Lessons were added to the optional subjects. It was only in 1893 that *one* of the three subjects, History, Geography and Grammar, was made obligatory in the Primary School course, at the option of the schools. In that year Drawing was also made compulsory. It will thus be seen that during the years 1862 to 1893, a period of over thirty years, not a single subject out of all the above subjects except language and arithmetic (i.e. the three R's) was made obligatory in English schools. It is also important to note that only a very few schools provided instruction in these subjects before 1900 in the lower standards of primary schools. It may be further pointed out that during a period of thirty years from 1862-92, the English primary schools had the busiest period in their history; for, while in 1862 only 5 to 6 per cent of the population of England was in schools, in 1880 this percentage had nearly trebled and in 1893 when one of the three subjects—History, Geography or Grammar—was made obligatory, England had, for nearly more than a decade, the proud privilege of having almost all school-going children (6 to 11 according to our standard) in its primary schools.

It will be both interesting and instructive to see how the Bombay educational administrators imposed the several "optional" subjects of the English schools on the Bombay Primary Schools, making them not "optional" as in England but "obligatory". It would appear that as soon as it was discovered in Bombay that a certain subject was introduced in the schools of England, it was soon prescribed for the Bombay schools, making the curriculum compulsorily richer and richer and even far more in advance of the *ordinary* English elementary school curriculum of the time, at least so far as the number of subjects was concerned. Efficiency was the ideal and no one can seriously blame those who were responsible

for the education of Bombay in those days for their enthusiasm in trying to bring the Bombay Primary School curriculum in line or even at a higher level than that of English schools of that time. For, in those days the Departmental ideal was efficiency rather than expansion. Now the ideal is altered and the time has come to adjust our means to our end, that is, the task of teaching *all* the children that ought to be in schools. One cannot, however, help remarking that in copying wholesale the English model and superimposing it on Indian schools, the educational administrators hardly took into account the very important fact that the needs of a mainly agricultural country, split into numerous villages, would not be the same as those of a highly urbanised and industrialised country like England. It follows, therefore, that even from the point of view of efficiency the curriculum laid down was not altogether suitable for the needs of the Indian masses since the greatest use of knowledge to them was the ability to read and write and to be able to understand simple monetary transactions between themselves, the landlord, the village *sowkar* and the *Sarkar*.

The Bombay (lower) Primary School curriculum (standards upto IV) was first framed under the Departmental Code in 1865-66, and the subjects included were exactly the same as in England at the time, namely, the three R's, except this that Bombay added "Grammar" to the IV standard. As soon as England prescribed Geography and History as "optional" subjects for the IV standard, Bombay planted both of them almost the very same year on the II or III standards as compulsory subjects. As to Object Lessons, Bombay had them in 1887 or five years later than England (1882) but compulsorily, not at option, as was the case in England. As regards Drawing, England had it as a compulsory subject in 1893, and Bombay ten years later. Nature Study took very long to come to Bombay. In England it appeared on the scene in about 1902, in Bombay in 1919. Be it however noted that compulsory Physical Training which was introduced in English Primary Schools in 1902, has not as yet appeared in the Bombay schools as a compulsory subject.

In 1907, just when the four years' compulsory course was changed into one of six years, the Japanese Elementary School curriculum for the compulsory four standards had the following compulsory subjects: (1) Morals, (2) Japanese language, (3) Arithmetic, (4) Singing and Gymnastics. Morals we do not teach as a regular part of our curriculum; singing and gymnastics (Physical Training) are not even today our compulsory subjects. It therefore follows that if we are to choose from the Japanese curriculum the corresponding subjects for the curriculum of our simplified scheme, there only remain Language—reading and writing—and Arithmetic. In Japan, History and Geography were taught (1907) in the V and VI standards only. Drawing and Manual Work were *optional* from the first standard, and sewing was taught (perhaps to girls only) from the third year as a compulsory subject.

While we are on the subject of the simplification of the curriculum we may note the following curriculum for the Japanese first four standards in Arithmetic in 1907:

Standard I.—Counting: numeration and notation; addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of numbers less than 20.

Standard II.—The same of numbers less than 100.

Standard III.—Ordinary addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Standard IV.—The same continued; Decimals, their numeration, notation, easy addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. (*Abacus* arithmetic: addition and subtraction.)[5]

In the English Code of 1862 which presented only the three R's for the primary schools, the course for Arithmetic was as follows:[6]

Standard I.—Form on blackboard or slate from dictation figures upto 20. Name at sight figures upto 20. Add and subtract figures upto 10 orally from examples on the blackboard.

(4) The number of pupils per teacher in the primary schools must be increased. It is at present about 30 on rolls; it should be about 60 on rolls, if not more:

This suggestion, staggering as it may appear, is the crux of the problem of the expansion of primary education amongst the masses of this country. The future of the expansion of education rests mainly on a satisfactory solution of this vital problem. No other measure would approach this one in point of magnitude and effectiveness in tackling the problem of mass education in India and the liquidation of illiteracy within a reasonable period of time. It may therefore be emphatically urged that administrators of primary education in India and all others who are responsible for it, should give this suggestion their utmost thought and consideration, before they set it aside as impracticable or unwise. Convinced as the writer is of the supreme importance of this question to the primary education in India, and conscious as he is of a possible attitude of prejudice begotten of deep-rooted traditions, an endeavour will be made to show that this most vital suggestion is based upon the practice obtaining in most of the advanced nations of the world, including England, even when they were at a stage of educational advancement of the masses which, compared to that of ours of today, may be safely said to be far more satisfactory. This is done in the hope that what was considered to be good for the masses in England, Germany, Japan and other countries, would not be con-

5. *Japanese Education*, Baron Kikuchi (1907), p. 117.
6. *History of Elementary Education*, by Birchenough (1920), p. 279.

sidered as unwholesome for the good of the masses in India. It may be noted here that before the Department of Public Instruction was instituted in Bombay (1855), the Bombay primary schools were run on the lines of the English schools in point of number of pupils per teacher. Soon after the Department took over the control of the schools, it set up before it an ideal of school organisation which, for its small number of pupils per teacher and an increasingly richer curriculum, cannot but excite our admiration, for it excelled in those points the organisation of English schools from which the Bombay administrators of Education of those times must have taken their lessons.

In another part of this paper a note will be found with reference to this very question and some allied questions affecting the English system. In that note the question is treated in more detail and hence only comparative statistics will be considered here. In 1841 the then Board of Education in Bombay (the predecessor of the Department of Public Instruction of today) laid down for the first time the following rule concerning the supply of teachers in primary schools: "The rate of pay will be fixed generally according to the number of pupils. In schools of 50 and under Rs. 10; from 50 to 70 Rs. 12; from 70 to 90 Rs. 15; and from 90 upwards Rs. 20."[7] This means that a school was to have only one teacher whatever the number, and the teacher was to manage the instruction of the pupils entrusted to his care irrespective of the numbers. In a very few cases where the number was very large one more teacher was given; but such cases were rare. In 1841 the number of pupils per teacher in the primary schools controlled by the Board was on an average 65, being the same as in England. There was only one adult teacher for each primary school, whatever the number. The help of "Monitors" was taken by the teacher in carrving on his work and it must have been so in Bombay schools also. For, the use of "Monitors"—advanced students—as helping hands in the school work was of Indian origin. An accidental discovery of this system on the part of an English missionary of Madras towards the close of the 18th century led him to introduce that system called the "Madras System" in England and it was this "Madras System" or "Monitorial System" that paved the way of mass education in England during the first half of the 19th century.

This practice of entrusting a school ordinarily to one teacher and to two or more if the numbers were very large, continued to function for about 15 years or to the last days of the Board's administration (1855). The figures for this year are very reliable as the Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1854-55 (the first Report), gives a long list of *all* the Departmental schools with details regarding the number of pupils and teachers. The number of pupils per teacher for each of the four

7. *Report of the Board of Education*, 1841, p. 130.

Educational Divisions of the time varies from 55 to 80, the average for all schools being 68. The statistics for English schools for this year are not available but ten years later, that is in 1865, the number of pupils per teacher in English primary schools stood at 63.

Then came the regime of the Department of Public Instruction in Bombay. The ideals of school administration were suddenly changed. Efficiency rather than expansion, which the former authorities had in view, was held up as the ideal of primary educational administration. Unfortunately accurate figures for the years 1855-81 are not easily available. In 1881 the number of pupils per teacher was about 23. In 1907 one of the Divisional Inspectors wrote that "good schools have one teacher for each class with an attendance of 20 to 30; when a class exceeds 40, it is split up into two".[8] It may therefore be assumed that at this time the number of pupils per teacher was about 25, if not less. From 1912 onwards the figures are available. The following table would be of interest:

Year	*No. of Pupils per Teacher (on rolls)*
1841	65
1855	68
1881	23
1902	25
1912	28
1922	27
1932	31

The figures for England (available to the writer) for some of the decades upto 1885 when the process of expansion was completed, stood as follows:

Year	*No. of Pupils*
1865	63
1875	52
1885	50
(1932	between 30 and 35)

The special note on the English System which will be found in Part II will throw further light on the real significance of these figures owing to the inclusion of "pupil teachers" in the calculated number of teachers.

Let us now enquire into the past practice in the several countries of Europe and America and in Japan. The present figures for these countries would not be so instructive on this point as those of the past; for, as a nation advances in education and consequently in prosperity it is but right that it should try to make its schools more and more efficient. It cannot be denied that one of the most impor-

8. *Report of the D.P.I.*, 1902-07, p. 32.

Note.—The year shown is the year of the publication of the Report or book containing the information.

tant factors in the imparting of effective instruction in schools is the number of pupils entrusted to each teacher. The writer is fully conscious of the fact that the lesser the number of pupils per teacher the better it is for the pupils. The question is how far a nation can march towards the ideal of smaller classes consistently with its wants and its resources.

The following is the summary of Code Rules of some of the countries regarding the maximum number of pupils allowed per teacher:

Country		*Maximum Number per Teacher allowed*
England	(from 1894 onwards)	60
France	1906	50
Germany	1896	80
,,	1909	70
,,	1923	60
Hungary	1905	80
,,	1910	60
Switzerland	1905	70
Italy	1932	60
Portugal	1905	80
Servia	1905	70
Czechoslovakia	1924	80
Japan	1906 } 1915 } 1923 }	*70 (Ordinary Elementary school) *60 (Higher Elementary school)

Contrast with these figures "The Bombay Primary Education Rules of 1924, Rule No. 57" which is in force today:

> "The number of pupils on the rolls of a class and if a teacher is in charge of more than one class, the total number of pupils on the rolls of all such classes *shall* not exceed 40."

The statistics given above will show the maximum number of pupils allowed for each teacher. This number could be taught by one teacher only if the requisite number was available. But in many schools the requisite number is not available and hence if the schools of the country as a whole are taken, the number of pupils per teacher is bound to be less on an average than the maximum number allowed. The average number gives us a better insight into the conditions of the staffing of schools of a country than the maximum number allowed per teacher, though the latter has a significance of its own. The figures for the past are more instructive than those for the present:

* In both cases the number may be raised by 10 by special sanction.

Country	Year (approximate)	Average No. of Pupils per Teacher
England	1865	63
	1880	53
	1900	40
	1920	(Approximately) 32
	1930	30
Scotland	1901	43
	1916	40
Ireland	1901	55
	1916	50
Germany	1901	64
	1916	63
	1922	45
France	1901	35
	1916	35
Austria-Hungary	1901	50
	1916	43
Austria	1875	74
	1920	50
Switzerland (Canton)	1908	48
	1916	42
Lucerne	1897	63
Zurich	1897	69
Sweden	1890	54
	1916	35
Norway	1901	45
	1916	42
Italy	1901	46
	1916	50
Belgium	1901	48
	1916	42

Country	Year (approximate)	Average No. of Pupils per Teacher
Bulgaria	1901	43
	1916	52
Poland	1925	50
Russia	1901	27
	1908	25
	1916	30
Japan	1905	54 (Lower elementary)
	1901	49
	1916	44
	1926	44
Philippines	1906	80
	1924	54
U.S.A. (City Schools)	1873	56
	1882	57
Argentine Republic	1911	53
Brazil	1920	45
Peru	1905	53
Mexico (Rural Schools)	1926	60
Canada (Ontario)	1901	48
	1916	43
Australia (N.S.W.)	1901	45
	1916	40

These figures, covering as they do most countries of note, have an important lesson for the educational administrators of Bombay. Attention is particularly invited to countries like Poland, Peru, the Argentine Republic and Mexico which are now on the path to progress which others have already achieved. About the Philippine Islands more particulars are given in a separate note printed in Part II. The figures for Russia—the most illiterate country of Europe—at least before the Soviet era—have also their lessons.

It may be urged that an average Bombay primary school teacher will not be able to teach so many pupils at a time, that the percentage of trained teachers in Bombay is small compared to that in other countries, that wastage and stagnation will increase resulting in a waste of public money and that the combination of two or more standards in one class, with such large numbers as are here advocated, will result in hopeless inefficiency. To all these and similar questions, it may be replied that the Bombay teacher is not so incompetent as com-

pared to teachers of other countries, and that the percentage of trained teachers today in Bombay (about 50) is not less than what it was in England in its most active period of expansion of primary education (upto 1885), when each teacher was teaching on an average more than 50 pupils (*vide* special note on the English System). In almost all countries referred to above, the maximum number of pupils allowed for each teacher is to consist of children of not only one standard, but all the standards into which the school pupils could be divided according to their stages of progress. Why should not a Bombay teacher look after a far larger number than he is doing today, if he is helped by the utmost simplification of the curriculum and if regularity of attendance is secured by a compulsory attendance measure? As regards the fear of wastage, this has already been dealt with and it has been shown that such wastage is inevitable in the initial stages of a country's progress in education and the fear of it need not deter us from taking a bold step forward in the direction of a rapid expansion of mass education.

(5) Wherever classes of 60 pupils cannot be arranged for, a system of part-time instruction may be introduced, thus making it possible for each teacher to look after not less than 60 pupils:

We have discussed in the foregoing pages, the desirability of increasing the number of pupils per teacher to 60. We are aware that such a revolutionary suggestion which runs counter to the accepted practice of school-organisation of more than three-quarters of a century, cannot be put into operation all at once. There will be a revolt against it from a section of the public which does not think in terms of the future. There will be protests from the teachers themselves, who are unfortunately not in a position to grasp the real significance of the problem of primary education for the masses. They have been trained to think more of efficiency than of other important aspects of school-instruction. But determined efforts backed by conviction will not fail to create a new atmosphere.

In order to meet the difficulties half-way, to begin with, we suggest the system of part-time instruction. This may take various forms in actual practice. The Shift System or Double Shift System, as it is sometimes called, is one form of part-time instruction. In remote villages, where the number of pupils that could be collected in one place is small, say 20, the school may be held on two or three days in the week, the teacher going to other such villages for the rest of the week. The object of such part-time instruction should always be to see that each teacher is ultimately made responsible for pupils approximating 60 in number. We have already insisted on a simplification of the curriculum and a thorough revision of the text books. After doing this, wherever it is found otherwise necessary, a system of part-time instruction in its

various accepted forms may be of very great help in bringing into force our recommendation of giving more pupils to one teacher and thus instructing almost double the number of pupils with the supply of teachers and equipment now available in our primary schools.

It must be made clear at the outset, that the part-time system in its various forms is not held up as an ideal. All who have practised it have done so because their funds were small and the numbers to be instructed large. Some who had practised it in the past, even for a long period of time, have given it up, or are trying to do so, as soon as conditions become favourable for such a departure. Faced with the problem of accommodating almost three times the number that we are now teaching in our primary schools, we are suggesting this device, and we shall be anxiously looking forward to a time, however distant it may be, when with our finances improved and with our legislature more liberally inclined to finance education, we shall be in a happy position to do away with these measures and return back to a system of full-time instruction to all the children of the soil.

Let us now survey the various methods of part-time instruction that were or are practised in some of the countries of the world. So far as could be ascertained, England has never adopted this method of instruction in its elementary schools, except for pupils who at one time used to be wage-earners in employment. But gradually this concession was done away with and today scholars in primary schools of England receive full-time instruction.

Foremost amongst the countries of Europe to adopt the system of half-day schools for the lower sections of their primary school children for a number of years and on a large scale, was Germany. From the available information it appears that the States of Saxony and Prussia, especially Saxony, had a system of half-day schools. A perusal of the extracts at the end of this paper, about the systems of elementary schools in Prussia and Saxony as they stood in about 1902, will show the extent to which the system of half-day schools for younger children was prevalent in these States, how large numbers were entrusted to teachers and how the school organisation was modified according to the circumstances. In fact, the key of the organisation appears to be this, that the syllabus was made very simple and the hours were shortened for the younger children. It may be noted that even today in Germany the number of hours devoted to the first standard (Lowest Primary) does not exceed 18 per week in the new system of schools which are called "Grundschule" or Foundation Schools.

In France, about the year 1900, it appears that half-day schools were allowed by the school-organisation rules as will be seen from the following: "The Departmental Council also may, after consultation with the Municipal Council and upon the proposal of the Inspector

of Academy, establish half-time schools (Ecoles de demi-temps) in any Commune or part of a Commune. In such a case the Director of the school is to divide the children into two groups, one for the morning from 8 to 11 and the other for the afternoon, from 1 to 4." [9]

In Italy, a class may be taken in alternate sessions if the number of pupils exceeds sixty and no additional teacher is supplied.

In Switzerland, the number of *minimum* hours per week allotted to standards one and two of the primary schools was (1905) 15 and 18 respectively. Whether this allotment of 15 and 18 hours to the lower standards was made use of to relieve the teacher and make him devote more time to other standards cannot be exactly ascertained.[10]

In Denmark (1912) although regular half-time instruction was not in existence, it was so arranged "that the older pupils may attend three whole days and two half days instead of the full time during the summer, while the same held good for children (younger pupils), during the winter months. In some cases, the attendance may even be further reduced ".[11]

In Sweden (1902), in many places, the school district was divided into two or more sections (Rota) and the school migrated from one to another, dividing the school year between them. Even in the ordinary schools "a school year is often sub-divided between different groups of children, different classes being taught at different periods of the year, or on alternate days of the week; so that, in actual practice, many Swedish children are only under instruction for four months of the year ".[12]

In Norway (1900), compulsory school attendance amounted to 12 weeks per annum. In school districts having less than 20 scholars the school was allowed to be held in rotation in the houses of the inhabitants where sufficient room could be procured.[13] In some schools the children attended every other day and helped at home on the intervening days. This arrangement gave very good results.

In Portugal (1905), "In rural schools there are generally two daily meetings of equal duration except where the school building is too small for the number of children in attendance in which case half the children attend in the morning and half in the afternoon." [14]

In the United States of America, in about 1912, the average number of days in the schools attended by children in the year differed from State to State, varying from 100 days to 200, the average being about

9. *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, Vol. VII, p. 258.
10. ibid., Vol. VIII. (1902), p. 253.
11. *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, U.S.A., Vol. I. (1912), p. 513.
12. *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, Vol. VIII. (1902), pp. 100-102.
13. ibid., pp. 72-74.
14. ibid., p. 448.

157 days.[15] This shows that the children in the primary schools of the U.S.A. received instruction on an average for a little over half of the full-time day.

In the Argentine Republic (1925), "The schools are open in the morning and afternoons, but the two sessions are attended by different groups of pupils; in other words, the schools are organised on the double shift system." [16]

Coming to the States of Australia, a country which has to tackle the problem of sparse population and agricultural conditions, we find that a number of devices were used to meet the educational needs of the masses. These may be summarised as follows:

(1) Half-time Schools: These were established wherever 16 children were available into groups of not less than 8 in each. The teacher divided his time between the two sections.

(2) House-to-House Schools: These were for teachers who had two or more stations under their charge. The time devoted to each station was necessarily shorter than in half-time schools. The Half-day Schools were defined as schools which were open for a portion (morning or afternoon) of each day only, or alternate days or on any number of days in the week less than five.

In 1916, it is reported as follows about schools in Queensland: "The most interesting feature of the system, however, relates to the expedients for reaching children in isolated districts who cannot be brought to an organised school even by conveyance at public expense. This is accomplished by a system of travelling teachers, Saturday Schools, Week-end Schools House-to-House Schools, Part-time Schools, and Camp Schools." [17]

The New Era of intellectual revolution in Japan, began in 1868 and in 1872 the education of the people was taken up in right earnest.[18] The rise in the number of pupils in elementary schools within about 6 years was simply phenomenal. In 1873, the number was 11,46,000. In 1879, it was 23,00,000 or more than double. In 1873, the percentage of attendance was 28, in 1879, it became more regular and stood at 41. Those who cry against expansion at the cost of efficiency in the beginning of a country's progress towards mass education can take a lesson from these figures.

To return to the part-time instruction in Japan, it is understood that the Japanese educational administrators found that the grand scheme which they had modelled on the Dutch and French systems was

15. *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, U.S.A., Vol. I, 1912, p. xviii.
16. *Educational Yearbook*, 1925, pp. 27-28.
17. *Report of the Commissioner of Education* (U.S.A.), Vol. I, 1916, p. 648.
18. *Japanese Education*, by Baron Kikuchi, 1909, pp. 75-76.

too ambitious for the resources of the nation. Japan was not slow to modify the scheme to suit her conditions. In 1879, the old Code which prescribed a model curriculum and full-time attendance was abolished and a New Code promulgated. According to this, the subjects taught in elementary schools were much simplified. Whereas in the old Code, attendance was required during the whole period, in the new, children were only required to receive instruction for a minimum of 16 *months* during the period of 6 to 14 years of the child's age. This means that 2 months' attendance on an average in a year was prescribed by the new Code. The system of a common teacher going round villages which could not afford to maintain an independent school was also initiated.

In 1880, the subjects to be taught in elementary schools were still further simplified by allowing Geography and History to be omitted according to circumstances. It was officially recognised for the first time, that so far as elementary education was concerned, the instruction ought to be simple and practical. Parents were placed under obligation to make children attend school for at least 16 *weeks* every year during the school-age (6 to 14) until they finished the *first three years' course*, and even after that, unless they could give satisfactory reasons for not doing so.

But all along these years of expansion Japan did not think of part-time instruction. In 1886, however, a further step was taken and the elementary school course was divided into an *ordinary* course of four years and a higher one of four years. The ordinary course was made compulsory; and where the people were unable to pay fees and thus contribute towards the maintenance of a full-time ordinary elementary school, permission was given to establish special schools for children of the poor who could not pay fees. The course of such schools was to extend over not more than *three* years, instruction to be given daily for not less than two or more than three hours. So, in about 15 years' time Japan had to come down twice, both in the elementary school course for all schools, and in the time of instruction prescribed for schools of the poorer districts. Speaking of these measures, a Japanese writer says, "In some respects, it was a step backward, necessitated by the financial conditions of the country."

In 1903 it was found necessary to extend the part-time system to all schools, working under special circumstances. The Regulation stated:[19] "The whole or a part of the children attending a school may be divided into two parts and taught at different times, as, for instance, one part in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon, under circumstances cited below, namely, (1) when it is impossible to provide

19. *Japanese Education,* by Baron Kikuchi, p. 132.

one regular teacher to each class; (2) when the school building is not large enough to accommodate all the children at the same time; and (3) when there is special necessity in connection with school attendance or the teaching of children."

Speaking of this system, Baron Kikuchi says: "This system seems to be well adapted to the actual circumstances in our country, where the increase of school accommodation and the supply of trained teachers cannot keep pace with the annual increase of school children." [20]

We may close this account of the system of part-time instruction in the primary schools of various countries by referring to what is being done in Egypt and Turkey today. These are nations which are just rising from the stupor of oriental contentedness. Their practice will appeal more to us than that of other countries. Of Egypt, we read, "The bulk of the accommodation available is for whole-time instruction ; but it is the policy of the Ministry gradually to change it to half-time accommodation with alternative sessions for boys and girls, thus providing for a larger number of children without any unduly immediate increase in accommodation or staffing." [21] In Turkey, "The number of children attending has risen from 343,438, in 1923 to 438,570 today. . . . In some places the schools have to work on half-time system in order to cope with the influx of children." [21]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We may now briefly restate the problem and indicate the broad conclusions. The problem is one of making the masses of this country literate. This is hardly the place to enquire into the desirability of this reform. Every committee and commission, every traveller and administrator and for the matter of that the history of every progressive nation tells us that the key to advance—both political and social—lies in the literacy of the masses. It would, therefore, not be very venturesome on our part if we assume that the progress of India is dependent largely upon the extension of mass education and that this reform cannot be delayed too long, since on it hangs the future destiny of this country.

But those who are in earnest about the expansion of mass education cannot shut their eyes to realities, the realities in our case being the wide extent of our country, its backwardness and its poverty.

Today only one child in every three is attending school. The problem is to make the other two also do the same. But already to make one in three attend school, the Government and Local Bodies have very nearly reached the end of their resources; and unless a

20. ibid., p. 131.
21. *The Year Book of Education*, 1932 (Evans Bros.), pp. 986 and 974.

miracle happens there is little chance of more money being made available in the near future for the expansion of education. If, therefore, there is to be expansion it must be attained within the available financial resources. Can this be achieved?

This leads us to enquire into the past history both of this country and of others. It will be seen that at the altar of efficiency we have sacrificed expansion. And the tragedy of it is that we are not quite sure that the vain pursuit of this doubtful ideal which made us deny the use of the tools of knowledge to generations of men, has produced results commensurate with the cost.

India, though one of the poorest countries in the world, adopted the most inflated standards of efficiency which even the richest could not afford at a very late stage of their educational development. Where others ended we began, copying mostly the form and rarely the substance. We hardly ever formulated our needs, nor did we give much thought to how the ideal of mass education could be achieved. In fact, it will not be an exaggeration to say that we were never very serious about our ideal of a literate India.

It was Carlyle who said: 'History is philosophy teaching by experience.' If that is so, there is no dearth of such experience, which is, in fact, blazoned forth on all the pages of world educational history. We have merely to stir ourselves to benefit by it.

The central problem, therefore, is: if we want to create a literate India within our present resources, can this be accomplished? In the opinion of the present writer this is perfectly possible. It only requires a breaking away from deep-rooted prejudice, a sincere belief in the need of a literate India and a proper appraisal of the educational needs of the country. What we must aim at, let it be reiterated, is not the education of the few but of the masses.

The educational history of this country during the last hundred years, so far as the progress of literacy is concerned, makes tragic reading. The percentage of literacy during a century has risen only from 6 to 8 and if we do not change our methods of educational administration and adopt remedies to suit the needs of the country, it may take us another hundred years to make the masses literate.

When the Reform Bill of 1867-68 was passed in England extending the right of suffrage to a large class hitherto excluded from taking any part in the Government of the country there was a cry 'Let us educate our new masters'. The Education Act of 1870 followed. The advent of democracy in this country also makes it incumbent on us to 'educate our masters'.

Assuming that no further funds would be available and that we have to manage within our present financial resources for the expansion

of mass education, the present writer feels that it will not be impossible to achieve our end if certain simple but far-reaching remedies such as those already outlined are adopted. These briefly are :

(1) Increasing the number of pupils per teacher from 30 to 60;

(2) Reducing the period of the primary school course from 5 to 4 years;

(3) Simplification of the curriculum;

(4) Raising the minimum age of admission from 6 to 7;

(5) Adoption of the Shift System or some variation thereof.

In adopting these remedies we shall be in good company, for our fellow banner-bearers will be some of the most enlightened countries of the world.

The choice before us is one between the 'efficient' instruction of the few and the literacy of the many. It is for the friends of the country to decide whether they are willing to overhaul their methods and learn by the teaching of history or whether they wish to continue to make a fetish of efficiency and at its altar sacrifice mass literacy.

PART II

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE EXPANSION OF MASS EDUCATION IN SOME FOREIGN COUNTRIES

(A) NOTES

Primary (Elementary) Education in England with special reference to the number of pupils per teacher

In the year 1833, the British Parliament began to aid education, for the first time, by giving grants to private schools. In 1839, it was laid down in the Educational Code of that time that a teacher should be entrusted with a class of 40 to 50 children ; but it was also recommended that a larger number should be assembled for subjects "not so technical as to require a division into classes of 50". In 1862, when the pupil-teacher system was in full force, the Code allowed, *after the first 50 scholars in average attendance*, either one pupil-teacher for 40 scholars or one certified teacher for every 80 scholars. The scale of teachers of the several qualifications and grades from 1882 (probably from 1872) onwards is shown in the following statement. In 1894, the maximum number of pupils on the register of any class or group of classes under the instruction of one teacher was limited to 60, and this limit holds good today :

Staffing of Elementary Schools in England from the Year 1882 to 1922

	Average Attendance				Number on Roll[22]			
Year	1882	1890	1897	1922	1882	1890	1897	1922
Qualifications of Teacher								
1. Principal Certified Teacher (Head Teacher)	60	60	50	35	85	80	63	40
2. Other Certified Teacher (Certified Assistant)	80	70	60	60	114	93	85	70
3. Uncertified Assistant	60	50	45	35	85	67	56	40
4. Pupil-Teacher (Student Teacher)	40	30	30	20	56	40	38	23
5. Candidate	20	..	..	..	28	..	..	..
6. Additional Woman-teacher over 18 (Supplementary Teacher)	40	30	30	20	56	40	38	23

If we take the average number of pupils per teacher in the elementary schools of England from 1865 onwards, we find that the number on rolls per teacher gradually fell from 63 in 1865 to about 40 in 1901. There is no doubt that if figures per teacher and the maximum number of pupils allowed for a class are taken into consideration, the English system had a distinct advantage over the Continental systems; but this apparent advantage was secured, at least during the whole of the nineteenth century, by a device of securing cheap staffing which was peculiar to the English system. A peep into the development of primary education in England shows that from about 1801 to 1845, the English system of primary education was carried on by what was called the 'Monitorial System'. The essence of this system consisted of setting children to teach children. The system was essentially the cheapest system possible. A teacher was in charge of the school and under him for groups or classes of children (25 to 35 or even less in number), there were monitors chosen from the top class of the school; a monitor was helped in his work by the best boys of the class entrusted to his care. The teacher only supervised and controlled the school and, whenever possible, instructed the monitors for their own advancement. The monitors were not paid any remuneration and therefore, irrespective of the number of pupils, the only expenditure on teacher's pay was on account of the teacher who managed the school. The system seemed to work wonders so far as the cost of education was concerned; and within a space of about 30 years, the education of the masses, especially of the poor people's children, spread surprisingly throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain. In 1833, the State began to aid education through private agencies which maintained and controlled schools especially for the children of poorer people. Although statistics of the time are not clear, there is reason

22. The percentages of average attendance to Number on Roll were 70, 75, 80 and 86 in 1882, 1890, 1897 and 1922 respectively.

to assume that by 1833, about *five* per cent of the working class population was under instruction in schools ; and almost all of this progress could be attributed to the adoption of the very cheap 'Monitorial System'.

Speaking of the schools and their work of this time (1833), Sir Michael Sadler remarks :

> "But although the teachers were, as a rule, not trained, and often unable to impart knowledge, although the buildings were frequently not suitable for schools, the books deficient in numbers and quality, the attendance of the scholars very irregular, yet the 'first step' not only had been taken, but the children had been accustomed to school life."[23]

From 1883 onwards, the State began to take interest in the education of the masses and naturally the defects of the 'Monitorial System' received attention from the State authorities and also from prominent educationists of the time. It was felt that however cheap the agency of the monitors might be, it was not a desirable system. The monitors were not attached to the school in any way. Their help was taken so long as they were available. They changed often. As an improvement upon the 'Monitorial System,' what is called the 'Pupil Teacher System' was therefore evolved. The monitors were replaced by pupil-teachers who were boys or girls of 13-17 years of age and who accepted apprenticeship in a school on a very small remuneration representing about 1/10th to 1/5th of the salary of a regular adult teacher. From 1846 to about 1870, the British educational system was dominated by the employment of a vast number of pupil-teachers who at the end of their apprenticeship of 4 to 5 years, could be certified as assistant teachers on passing certain tests. They taught for the full period of the school day under the supervision of an adult teacher and received instruction from him out of school hours, for which the teacher was paid a small remuneration. The unpaid monitors were gone ; but the poorly paid pupil-teachers replaced them. A pupil-teacher could be held responsible for 40 pupils and an adult teacher for 80. The effect was that the schools began to employ pupil-teachers in large numbers as more than five pupil-teachers could be employed for the salary of one adult teacher. The state of things may be better realised from the following table which gives the number of pupil-teachers employed in British schools for every 100 adult teachers :

Year	*Adult Teachers*	*Pupil-teachers*
1850	100	400
1855	100	400
1860	100	200
1865	100	200
1870	100	100
1880	100	75
1890	100	45
1900	100	25

When it was realised that the permission to employ pupil-teachers as regular members of the teaching staff was being availed of more and more on the score of cheapness, the rules permitting such employ-

23. *Special Report on Educational Subjects*, Vol. II, p. 449.

ment were made more stringent and from 1902, the recruitment of pupil-teachers was gradually superseded by what are called 'student-teachers' and 'supplementary teachers' (boys and girls) who were above 18 years of age.

A Member of the House of Commons spoke as follows in 1898 :

"Pupil-teachers were, I suppose, originally sanctioned in the school, and were paid out of the public money in the expectation that they would only be temporary, but in practice, they were so extremely useful as furnishing in the school cheap child labour that the object of their institution is liable to be lost in the secondary purpose which they serve." [24]

Since the inception of the Pupil-teacher System (1846) to about 1870, the British primary schools made considerable use of cheap labour of the pupil-teacher. Large schools were often conducted solely with the assistance of pupil-teachers. Whatever the disadvantage of this, it must be granted that during that period "the facilities of obtaining education, however deficient they might have been, had increased enormously and with them the number of those who had been instructed in reading and writing. Education had at last identified itself with public opinion. It was felt to be needful for the advancement of every physical, intellectual and moral good".

It has already been observed that in 1833, the percentage of working class population under instruction stood at about 5. In 1870, it stood at about 8. The gain from 5 to 8 per cent was undoubtedly achieved by the cheap means of education made available to the nation by the very wide adoption of the pupil-teacher system.

It will not be out of place here to give the figures of pupils per teacher in the English schools—(1) on the basis of all teachers including pupil-teachers and (2) on the basis of adult-teachers only, excluding pupil-teachers, for the years 1865 to 1895 :

Year	*No. of Pupils (on Roll) per Teacher including Pupil-Teachers*	*No. of Pupils (on Roll) per Adult-Teacher excluding Pupil-Teachers*
1865	63	119
1870	62	113
1875	52	116
1880	53	94
1885	50	72
1890	46	67
1895	42	57

These figures clearly show that between the years 1865-95 the number of pupils per teacher varied in British schools from 63 to 42, only because the schools were able to recruit pupil-teachers at a very cheap cost. Had it not been for this very cheap method of recruitment of teachers, the figure of pupils per teacher would have been much higher, or else, the British nation would have been forced to adopt

Note.—In the Bombay Presidency the Pupil-teacher System was introduced in 1868 and it appears that it flourished for several years. For want of proper statistics, the Bombay system is not discussed in detail.

24. *The Evolution of the Elementary Schools of Great Britain*, by J. C. Greenough (1903), p. 95.

other methods of cheapening the cost per pupil—methods such as half-day schools or part-time instruction which Germany and Japan were forced to adopt during the important period of their educational expansion. It must be said to the credit of the British nation that from the beginning of the 20th century, it has tried gradually to eliminate the disadvantages of the pupil-teacher system and in spite of the employment of adult teachers, it has maintained the per-teacher number of pupils at a very low figure (35-30), especially during the last 25 years. It remains to be seen whether the nation would be able to afford to maintain the figure at which it now stands. For, no other country in the world which can stand comparison with the British nation in point of national advancement, has been able to bring the number to such a low figure.

It is interesting to note the proportion of certified or trained teachers to teachers who may be styled as untrained or having no special qualification except the attainment of certain minimum standard of general education. The pupil-teachers are treated as untrained teachers.

Year	*Trained or Certified (per cent)*	*Untrained (per cent)*
1856	30	70
1865	48	52
1870	45	55
1880	44	56
1895	43	57
*1900	45	55
1914	68	32
1920	71	29
1930	74	26

The employment of woman teachers in elementary schools in England has been on the increase since the middle of the last century. The following will show the rate of the increase :

	Percentage of Male & Female Teachers	
Year	*Males*	*Females*
1856	55	45
1865	50	50
1870	47	53
1880	44	56
1895	34	66
1914	26	74
1917	25	75
1921	24	76
1930	23	77

* (i) " The whole number of teachers of elementary schools reported for England and Wales in 1900 was 139,818. Of these, 30,738 were pupil teachers, 30,233 assistant and 16,717 additional assistants—giving a total of 77,733 uncertificated teachers. There were 62,085 certificated teachers, but of these only 36,020 had passed through training colleges only about one-fourth of the whole number of total teachers. About seven-eights of the teachers in the elementary schools of France have taken the regular course in the State schools for the profession of teachers." *The Evolution of Elementary Schools of Great Britain* (1903), J. C. Greenough, p. 165.

(ii) *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, U.S.A., 1912, Vol. I, p. 489, remarks: " one-third of the teachers had been specially trained for their work, an additional one-fourth had passed an easy examination, while a little less than half the force had no assured qualifications for the work of teaching."

An interesting feature of the English educational system which in the past was an important factor in cheapening the cost of education was that the salaries of women teachers having equal qualifications and doing equal work, were less than those of men teachers. Even in the pupil-teacher system this difference held good. Apart from the justification of employing women teachers in schools in preference to men teachers, on other grounds than financial, it is noteworthy that the preponderance of women teachers has contributed materially to keeping the cost of education at a lower level than what it would otherwise have been.[25] The following will illustrate the difference in the salaries of male and female teachers :

Year	*Annual Average for a Male Teacher* £	*Annual Average for a Female Teacher* £	*Percentage of Col. 3 to Col. 2*
1870	94	57	60
1880	121	73	60
1890	120	76	63
1902	128	86	67
1914	124	93	76
1930	240	200	83

Primary Education in the Philippine Islands

The Government of the United States of America took possession of the Philippine Islands in 1899 from the Spanish Government. In 1901, a 'Bureau of Education' for the Islands was established and it took charge of the education of the people. The population of the Islands was about a crore. The utmost thought was given to devising a scheme of education suitable for the conditions of the people of the Islands. English—the language of the United States of America—was almost unknown to the people; and yet, the principal aim of the new system of education was "the spread of literacy on the basis of a common language, English". The formulation of a suitable scheme of education was entirely entrusted to American experts.

The great experiment of spreading literacy amongst a crore of people was begun in right earnest in 1901. *A course of primary education of three years' duration was prescribed.* The aim was to place the elements of an English education within the reach of children of every social class in every municipality and every hamlet of the Islands.

The Annual Report, Department of Interior, U.S.A., 1905, p. 345, makes the following comments on the three years' course :

"These three years of primary instruction must necessarily appear meagre and inadequate to most educators. It should be understood, however, that the primary course of three years does not lead directly to the various secondary courses which are offered at the provincial high schools. The plan being to have the Central Municipal Schools ultimately devote their attention to this intermediate course and to have all primary work done in the *barrio* schools, which will be located in

25. This difference in the salaries of men and women teachers of equal qualifications is observed in France and Canada also.

every one of the hamlets of which a Philippine *pueblo* or municipality is composed."

"The main reason for making the primary course so brief is the need for a plan of study, fairly complete though very simple, which can be taught wholly by Philippine teachers and which, within a reasonable time, can be given to all."

Speaking of the size of classes at this time, the same Report says:

"For the Philippine teachers actually engaged in class-room instruction, there is an average of *over* 70 pupils to the teacher, an unfortunately large number when other conditions are excellent and especially so when the poor housing, inadequate school furniture and the still limited training of the Philippine teacher are taken into consideration."

Within a space of four years (1903-06) the number of school children in these primary schools was more than double as will be seen from the following table:

Year		*Public Schools*	*Philippine Teachers*	*Attendance*	*No. of Pupils per Teacher*
1903	..	2000	3000	1,50,000	50
1904	..	2233	3584	2,27,600	63
1905	..	2727	4036	3,11,843	77
1906	..	3166	4719	3,75,554	80

In 1907, the primary course was extended from three to four years. This additional year was given, especially with a view "to increase the amount of time given to training in handicrafts".

The fourth year of the primary school was added to prepare young men and women for useful life in rural towns and the instruction was to be given in separate schools.

The industrial side of the education appears to have been attended to from the beginning of the child's education.

"The primary course covers four years, and from the first emphasis is laid upon industrial work. Each pupil must take in each grade two industrial courses, which include weaving, gardening, wood-working, modelling, lace-making, basketry, pottery, sewing, embroidery, poultry raising and domestic science. The usual scholastic branches are not neglected for the industrial work requires only from 30 to 60 minutes daily according to Grade."[26]

As regards the length of the school year and school attendance the head of the Department of Education writes: [27]

"The Philippine child who attends school regularly gets considerably more schooling in the course of a year than in some other countries. In the United States, the average length of the school year is about 152 days; in the Philippines the school year is 42 weeks or a total of 200 actual days of school. Of these 42 weeks, however, it is customary to take four or sometimes more in each province for a Teacher's Institute,

---

26. *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, U.S.A., Vol. I (1911), p. 442.
27. ibid., 1910, Vol. I, p. 292.

during which primary schools are closed, but not intermediate schools and high schools. The school year opens about the middle of June and terminates about the end of March."

In 1902, the percentage of population in schools to total population was 2; in 1925-26, it was 11.

The system of education in the Philippines is a system which was carefully thought, planned and carried out by a foreign Government interested in the welfare of a subject-people. It has its peculiar lessons for backward, especially agricultural countries of the world which are striving for educational uplift. Moreover, the Philippine system is perhaps the only system in the world which aims at the elimination of illiteracy, and at the same time provides industrial courses of a very practical and every-day use to its pupils in the primary stage of instruction.

N.B.—Mr. K. S. Vakil, M.Ed. (Leeds), retired Educational Inspector, Bombay Presidency, who visited the Islands in 1927 and studied the system critically is of opinion that the Philippine system is admirably suited to Indian conditions.

Primary Education in Porto Rico: An Experiment in Part-time Instruction

Port Rico is an island in the West Indies which, in 1898, was ceded to the United States of America by Spain. It had a population of about ten lakhs, about 40 per cent of which was 'coloured'. The educational system of the island was organised in 1899 and primary education was made compulsory at the same time. The following table shows the growth of literacy in the island from 1899 to 1929:

Year	*Percentage of Literates to the Total Population*
1899	17
1910	33
1920	45
1927	60
1929	65

In the *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, U.S.A., for 1916 (Vol. I, p. 12), an account is given of an interesting experiment of "double enrolment" in Porto Rico whereby a teacher was placed in charge of a group of 40 pupils in the morning and another similar group in the afternoon. This system was introduced in the first and second grades of urban schools and in nearly all rural schools. The system was introduced "for the purpose of reducing illiteracy as fast as possible". The *Report* in making mention of the experiment does not, however, speak of it in encouraging terms on grounds of efficiency. Unfortunately a further account of the results of the experiment is not available.

(B) DOCUMENTS

GERMANY

Extract from the Special Report on Educational Subjects, Educational Department, England, Vol. I, 1896, pp. 470-71.

THE PRUSSIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CODE

(In force from about 1872)

General Regulations concerning the Organisation, Duties and Aims of the Prussian Elementary Schools.

---

1. *The Normal Types of Elementary Schools*

Normal types are: (i) the elementary school with several classes; (ii) the school with two teachers; (iii) the school with one teacher, which may either be one-class elementary school or a half-day school.

2. *The One-class Elementary School*

In the one-class elementary school children of every school age are taught simultaneously in one and the same place by the same master. Their number must not exceed 80.

In the one-class school the children of the lower division receive, as a rule, 20 hours' instruction a week, those of the middle and upper divisions 30, including gymnastics for boys and needlework for girls.

3. *The Half-day School*

In cases where the number of children exceeds 80, or where the schoolroom is not large enough to accommodate a smaller number even, and the conditions do not permit the appointment of a second teacher, and in places where other reasons make it necessary, a half-day school may be organised with the consent of the Government, the classes of which receive altogether 32 hours' instruction in the week.

4. *The School with Two Teachers*

If two teachers are appointed the instruction must be given in two separate classes. If the number of the children exceeds 120, a third class must be organised. In such a school the third class receives 12 hours' instruction a week, the second 24 and the first 28.

5. *Elementary Schools with Several Classes*

In schools with three or more classes (so far as they do not come under paragraph 4) the children of the lower division receive 22 hours' instruction a week, those of the middle division 28, those of the upper division 30 to 32.

* * *

12. *The Divisions of the Elementary School*

The elementary school, even the one-class school, is divided into three divisions, corresponding to the age and different degrees of development of the children. Where a school has four classes, two belong to the middle division, if six, each division has two.

PRUSSIA

Extract from the Board of Education (England) Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Vol. 9, Education in Germany, 1902

p. 297. The proportion of teachers to children was in Prussia, 1 to 66; in England (with 5,422,989 children), 1 adult to 57 children.

* * *

p. 304. Children are admitted in the towns usually twice a year, at Easter and Michaelmas; and in the country once a year, at Easter. If a child's sixth birthday falls before June 1st, he has to go to school at Easter in the same year; if after June 1st, at the succeeding Easter. He is released from school at the corresponding date eight years later.

* * *

Of these in 1896, 22,410 schools with 1,477,558 children (in 1886, 23,125 schools with 1,718,076 children) were *taught by one teacher*; that is, in 1896, 62 per cent of the schools and 28 per cent of the children (1886, 68 per cent of the schools and 35 per cent of the children). The school taught by one teacher therefore fills a large place in the educational economy of Prussia, and a still larger place if we consider the country alone. Of the 31,896 country schools, 21,867, or 68 per cent were in 1896 taught by one teacher, against 74 per cent in 1886.[28]

Such schools are, with few exceptions, either one-class or two-class schools (Halbtagsschulen). The latter are defined as "schools of which one section is taught in the morning and the other in the afternoon".

* * *

p. 308. Although it is obvious that the difficulty of teaching a class is proportioned to the variety of grades included in it, yet the normal maximum of a "Klasse" is fixed at 80 for a one-class school, and at 70 for any other. If in a one-class school the numbers rise above 80, it may either be converted into a Halbtagsschule or be provided with a second teacher. When the numbers rise above 100 a second teacher must be appointed.

But even these very high limits are not by any means always observed. In the absence of the general law, the procedure in cases of defective supply is tedious and complicated, and the Minister often finds it difficult to compel compliance. Consequently, there still remain numerous "abnormal" classes (though their numbers have decreased), as the following figures show:

---

28. In 1927 the percentage of one-teacher schools in Bombay was less than 50 (Hartog Com. Report, p. 60.)

(*a*) General return of Abnormal[29] Classes :

	Classes	Per cent of all Classes	Scholars	Per cent of all scholars
1896	17,165	18	1,320,515	26
1886	25,535	34	2,333,373	46

(*b*) Number of One-class Schools with Abnormal Attendance :

	1896	1886
With 81–100 children	1,622	2,812
,, 101–150 ,, ...	388	1,751
Over 150 ,, ...	10	152
	2,020	4,715

(*c*) Number of abnormal classes containing over 150 scholars in one-class schools, or over 120 in other schools :

1896 .. .. .. 72, with 10,242 children
1886 .. .. .. 590, with 84,503 children

(*d*) And in 1896 there were four one-class schools with over 170 children in each, and one four-class school with 808 children, 202 to a class.

These returns, while they indicate a state of things which is far from satisfactory, and which would not be possible in England, point to very rapid improvement in the decade. Certain areas are still exceedingly backward. In the Regierungsbezirk Munster the proportion of abnormal classes was :

	1896	1886
Towns	67 per cent	80 per cent
Country	51 ,,	83 ,,

Of the country classes in the Regierungsbezirk Dusseldorf, 56 per cent were abnormal in 1896 (in 1886, 73); in Oppeln 51 per cent in 1896 (in 1886, 71).

Interior Organisation of Schools

p. 309. Elementary schools in Prussia are divided into three Stufen or steps ; in the lowest (Unterstufe) the child is prepared to receive instruction, in the next (Mittelstufe) he is grounded in the various subjects, and in the highest (Oberstufe) he is enabled to apply and extend his knowledge. According to the official theory he spends two years in the Unterstufe, three or four years in the Mittelstufe, and three or two in the Oberstufe. But the practice varies. The Unterstufe sometimes covers the first three years ; or again, the Oberstufe the four

29. Having more than 80 pupils per teacher.

last. The division is important, because the hours of work and the subjects taken are prescribed according to Stufen and not according to years. Within the Stufen there may, of course, be graded sections for particular subjects. But the key of the whole position in the smaller schools is the practice of grouping many different years for instruction; the syllabus is made very simple, and the hours are shortened for the younger children.

* * *

p. 313. In the winter half-year Unterstufe attends in the third and fourth hours of the morning, the Mittelstufe and the Oberstufe returning in the afternoon; so that the school is not for this period a pure Halbtagsschule. The three Stufen are never all present at once under this arrangement, and the Mittelstufe and Oberstufe always attend together. But this is not always so. In a Halbtagsschule of 121 children which I saw, the Mittelstufe is sometimes present with the Oberstufe, sometimes with the Unterstufe, and consequently receives more hours of instruction than either. In this case the Winter Time-table assigns to the Unterstufe 14 hours, to the Mittelstufe 30 hours, to the Oberstufe 21 hours. Similar modifications of the general rule occur when there are three classes under two teachers. In the Coblenz Regierung the apportionment of hours in that case is—Unterstufe, 12 hours; Mittelstufe, 26 or 24 hours, Oberstufe, 26 to 28 hours.

There is thus great elasticity as regards hours of work, and much accommodation of the school to outward circumstances. The free afternoon in summer which so widely prevails is a largess to the parents, who utilise their children's labour only too freely. But the Halbtagsschule, and the three-class school with two teachers, as well as the one-class school when the numbers are large, can only be regarded as makeshifts, the creation of exigencies not yet extinct. All these types are more or less defective. The one-class school keeps full hours, at any rate in summer, but the teacher cannot do justice to all the children. In the others, time is lost, even if the classes are brought within proper limits of size. More effective work, say the theorists, compensates for shortened hours. But at the best the defect is only shifted, not removed. And the remedy becomes fictitious when the normal limit of the class is approached or exceeded. For a Halbtagsschule, or a three-class school with two teachers, is still regarded as normal if there are 70 children to a class. And abnormal classes are not uncommon; there are 808 abnormal classes in Halbtagsschulen, and 1,099 such classes in three-class schools under two teachers. In such cases the three evils of shortened time, overburdened teachers, and over-large classes exist together.

* * *

SAXONY

Day School Organisation

p. 336. The term "offentliche Volksschule" includes in Saxony three kinds of schools, distinguished by the number of hours of instruction, the amount of the fees, the subjects taught, and the maximum size of the classes. These kinds are Simple, Middle, and Higher (einfache,

mittlere, and hohere Volkschule); whereas in Prussia the Mittelschule and hohere Madchenschule, though regarded as belonging to the lower order of schools, are not classed under the head of Public Elementary Schools. .

(*a*) The einfache Volksschule is a half-day school and is divided into at least two classes, except that in very few exceptional cases of small numbers a one-class organisation is allowed. The class must not exceed 60, a limit considerably lower than that of Prussia which is 80 for one-class schools, 70 for the others. Fees must be charged, but they are determined by all the locality and usually amount to five or six marks a year. The subjects are the same as those of the Prussian Volksschule.

These schools are the true Public Elementary Schools which supply the needs of the poorest part of the population, and they are consequently the schools of the villages. In some towns (as in Dresden) they do not exist, but when this is the case the fees of the mittlere Volksschulen are lowered.

(*b*) Mittlere Volksschulen (called in Dresden, Bezirksschulen) must have at least four classes, and be under a director. They are nearly all large town schools. The subjects of instructions are the same as those of the einfache Volksschulen, but with the extended scope rendered possible by longer hours. The third and the fourth years must receive 20 hours' teaching per week, and in the fifth to 8th years 26 hours are prescribed for the boys, 24 hours for girls, besides drill and needlework; and the course may extend to nine years. The fees are higher, and the number of teachers approaches or equals that of the classes. The limit of the classes is 50.

(*c*) The hohere Volksschulen (called in Dresden, Burgerschulen) provide a higher course of instruction, which must include one Modern Language. They charge still higher fees, and are assumed to extend their course to ten years. The hours are at least 22 in third year, and must rise to 30, but may not exceed 32, in the final stage.

The chief statistical facts may be shown as follows (for 1894):

	Schools		Scholars		Classes	
	Number	Per cent of total	Children in attendance	Per cent of total	Number	Average Size
Einfache ..	2,005	89.0	453,749	73	9,998	45
Mittlere ..	210	9.3	147,384	24	3,748	39
Hohere ..	39	1.7	16,715	·3	573	30
	2,254	100	617,848	100		

These figures show that both the number and the size of abnormal classes are kept within reasonable bounds. In the einfache Schulen such classes number only 615, or 6 per cent (as against 18 per cent in Prussia), and their average size is only 67 children, or 7 above the normal limit. But if we consider not the class, but the number of children entrusted to one teacher, we find that for each of the 8,617 places which require a fully employed teacher there are on the average 71.7 children; and with a class limit of 60, a single teacher may, and often does, under the half-day system teach 120.

The Halbtagsschule, which in Prussia is only called into being when the einklassige Schule becomes impossible, is in Saxony the archetype. With very few exceptions, even quite small einfache Volksschule are divided into morning and afternoon classes. It is true that many of the larger ones include parallel upper classes, which attend both morning and afternoon, and are therefore partly mittlere Volkschulen; but these are cases of development from the original type, which remains unaltered in the great majority of cases.

p. 338. Further, the Halbtagsschule is a true half-day school. There is none of the intermixture of attendance which is so often found in Prussia, but one section comes only in the morning, and the other in the afternoon, with the small modification necessary on half-holidays. This arrangement sets the juniors free every morning and the seniors every afternoon, throughout the year, and the Prussian plan of concentrating all the work into the summer morning is neither necessary nor allowed.

* * *

p. 338. The half-day school, as it exists in Saxony, actually and not merely theoretically fulfils its avowed purpose of securing smaller classes; but its defects are admitted. Herr Grullich, now a Schulrat in the Kultus-Ministerium, and formerly an Inspector, insists in his *Lehrplan fur die einfache Volksschule*, that the hours of instruction are insufficient. In the published comments of the Ministry in 1872, upon the proposals which are now law, it is pointed out that the limit of the Class (60), and of the number (120) to be taught by one teacher, was only so fixed because it seemed impossible to reduce it and it is strongly urged that individual localities should do what they can to lower it for themselves.

* * *

p. 338. The commonest forms of the village school, which is always an einfache Volksschule, are:

(*a*) The two-class school under one teacher, in which the minimum number of hours of instruction per week is for

Class I (5th to 8th years)	..	..	18
Class II (1st to 4th years)	..	..	14

Class I attends in the morning. Class II in the afternoon.

Of the whole number of einfache Volksschulen, 42 per cent were thus organised in 1894.

(b) The four-class school under two teachers, with minimum hours as follows:

Class I	(7th and 8th years)	.. 20
Class II	(5th and 6th years)	.. 18
Class III	(3rd and 4th years)	.. 14
Class IV	(1st and 2nd years)	.. 12

Classes I and II attend in the morning, Classes III and IV in the afternoon. Such schools numbered 24 per cent of the total in 1894.

This very limited allowance of time may be, and often is, increased by the School Committee representing the wishes of the locality.

* * *

p. 350. In England the system of compulsion is still in its infancy. Upto a certain point we are in theory more exacting; but public opinion is fluid, the administration of the law cumbrous, lax and uncertain, and punishment for offences can scarcely be obtained except in cases of long-continued disobedience. We also allow half-time exemption, exemption by attendance, or by a standard of attainment which greatly varies. We have not yet succeeded, as these countries have, in providing our schools with an unfailing regular supply of the raw material. Nor have we secured the teacher against the serious trouble of capricious migration, or, by confining admissions to a fixed date or dates in the year, prevented the disturbance of the work by a constant stream of new-comers. Again, the hours of attendance in England are the same for all elder children though slightly reduced for infants. The two German codes adopt a scale which varies according to class; *and although in a Halbtagsschule the general curtailment of time may be too great, yet its principle may be applied to the junior sections of schools, especially perhaps to infants' classes, as to solve some practical difficulties without educational loss.**

There are great differences also in the character and numerical strength of the teaching body. In Prussia and Saxony the number of teachers is comparatively small, because the half-day organisation and a high normal limit of the class are both dictated by economical reasons. No doubt it is too small, and Prussia's greatest need is the establishment of more classes under more teachers'. But as two teachers never act in one room, each additional teacher means an additional room, which it is often difficult to obtain. We have seen that the volume of work varies according to the number of teachers employed in a school, and thus automatically adjusts itself to the number of children on the rolls, —an adaptation to circumstances for which there is much to be said.

* * *

p. 423. The German rural school begins at 8 a.m. in the summer months, and 8-30 a.m. in the winter, and goes on until noon, with five minutes' interval between each lesson and a quarter of an hour at ten o'clock. The afternoon session is from 2 to 4 p.m., but by a Government order if the thermometer stands at or above 25 deg. C. at 10-30 a.m. then no afternoon school will be held.

* Italics ours.

The length of the morning meeting varies according to the age and class. It is not usual to see one class dismissed at ten o'clock, others at eleven, and the remainder at noon.

* * *

p. 424. Children under six years of age do not attend school and are not on the registers. There are, in proportion to the population, many more schools in Germany than in England, so that the schools are much nearer the children.

* * *

Extract from the Systems of Education, By Zia Uddin Ahmad, 1929.

p. 103.

VILLAGE SCHOOLS IN GERMANY

Villages in Germany are grouped together under the name of *Gemeinde.* Every circle has a School Inspector and all the village schools are under him. The circle, which I had the opportunity of visiting, had seventy-five villages with a population of 40,000. Each of these seventy-five villages had a school, teaching boys upto the age of fourteen, which is the age limit for compulsory education, though some of them consisted only of one teacher and one class. A second teacher is allowed if the number of students exceeds sixty.[30] In one school which had only one class, there were as many as sixty-two children.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Extract from the Special Report on Educational Subjects

Board of Education, England, 1901, Vol. 5

NEW SOUTH WALES

pp. 218-19.

Half-time schools are conducted in all respects as Public Schools under classified teachers. These may be established whenever sixteen children within ten miles of a certain point can be collected into groups of not less than eight in each. The teacher divides his time between the two sections, so as to effect largest amount of good.

House to house schools are similarly conducted, except that the teacher has three or more stations instead of two under his charge, and the numbers in each are smaller. The subjects of instruction are limited to reading, writing, dictation and arithmetic. The teachers in these schools hold no classification and are paid £4-10-0 a year per caput upto a maximum of £90.

Provisional schools are established in remote and thinly populated districts where no public school may exist, and where not fewer than ten, but not more than nineteen children between the ages of 6 and 14

30. The number is large, but the present financial position of the Government does not permit them to employ a teacher for a smaller number. Single-teacher schools, in some countries, divide the pupils into two batches. They teach the first batch on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the second batch on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

years can regularly attend. A provisional school may not be established within 4 miles, by nearest route of any existing public, provisional or half-time school.

VICTORIA

p. 304.

If there is no State-school which a child can attend within two miles, this is held to be a reasonable excuse in the case of children under nine; if over nine years of age, the child must attend if there is a school within two and a half miles, and if over twelve, if there is one within three miles.

TASMANIA

p. 454.

Half-day schools are schools which are opened either for a portion (morning or afternoon) of each day only, or alternate days, or on any number of days in the week less than five.

Extract from the Report of the Commissioner of Education (U.S.A.), 1912, Vol. I.

AUSTRALIA

p. 606.

The typical school is called simply the public or State school. It must maintain a certain average enrolment and must be kept in session the full time. There are also provisional schools; that is, schools which may be kept open for the full-time annually, but whose average enrolment is below the standard and half-time schools in districts, where the number of children is too small to justify the expense of a full-time school. In such cases, a teacher is appointed for two or more districts and holds the school in each one alternative days or for a half-session each day, according to the distance to be travelled. House-to-house schools have been recognised as a temporary expedient. The plan of conveying children at public expense from isolated districts to a Central School has been recently adopted and is gradually superseding that of special and half-time schools. In Victoria, this plan is extensively employed and has virtually eliminated the half-time schools. Night schools and in some of the Colonies, Infant schools, complete the public provision of popular education.

Extract from the Report of the Commissioner of Education (U.S.A.), 1916, Vol. I.

QUEENSLAND (Australia)

p. 648.

The most interesting features of the system, however, relate to expedients for reaching children in isolated districts who cannot be brought to an organised school even by conveyance at public expense. This is accomplished by a system of travelling teachers, Saturday schools, week-end schools, house-to-house schools, part-time schools and camp schools.

Extract from the Educational Yearbook, 1924

AUSTRALIA

pp. 15-16.

RURAL SCHOOLS: In New South Wales the term "rural school" is applied officially to certain large schools in country towns, at which the curriculum is varied by the inclusion of agricultural, domestic, and manual training in a higher ratio to other subjects than elsewhere. Although not known by the name "rural", several types of small schools are found in the sparsely settled districts. In settlements having an attendance of from ten to twenty pupils, or of a merely temporary character, provisional schools are established by the department of education. If a minimum attendance of ten pupils can be collected in two groups not more than ten miles apart, a half-time school is established, one teacher dividing his time between the two places. Whenever practicable, the education department pays for daily conveyance of pupils in the neighbourhood to central schools. In 1923 about 7,500 pupils were thus conveyed to 1,012 central schools. New South Wales has three travelling schools, which visit isolated families, teaching each for a week at a time. The masters of these picturesque institutions are equipped with a vehicle and a tent, the latter to be used as a schoolhouse. Again, there are subsidized schools, the teachers of which are employed by two or more families and subsidized by the State. Of recent years an increasing number of isolated children is being reached by correspondence schools with their headquarters in Sydney. Under certain conditions, too, the department of education makes payments in aid of boarding children in a township for the purpose of schooling. Thus the problems of the isolated child and the isolated family are faced with some courage; and it should be recollected that whenever twenty children can be gathered together a permanent public school is established and wholly supported by the State.

NEW ZEALAND

Extract from the Educational Yearbook, 1924

RURAL EDUCATION:

pp. 337-338.

The following are some of the methods adopted:

(10) In scatttered communities two small schools may be placed under a highly paid teacher who works them on alternate days, half-weeks or weeks. He works six days a week. Fine results are often secured.

(11) When the population is usually sparse, an itinerant teacher may have charge of three or four very small schools.

(12) When fewer than nine pupils are available and part-time instruction cannot be arranged, the government makes a grant of fifteen pounds a year per pupil and the parents contribute a sufficient amount to secure the services of a teacher. Sometimes a mother is paid the government subsidy for teaching her own children.

(13) Perhaps the most striking feature of the system is the introduction of correspondence classes—a modification of the plan so widely used for the adults. The success and popularity of the classes is quite remarkable and much of the work would do credit to a city school. There is a demand for an extension of the scheme, and it is even suggested that high-school subjects should be included.

p. 339.

A country without illiterates: Much of the work done in rural schools is equal to that of good city schools, and the far-reaching effect of the system is well illustrated by a recent action of the census authorities. They have found that illiteracy has practically disappeared, and so have deleted the questions relating to educational status from the census paper.

LITERACY IN INDIA

I. INTRODUCTORY

The Indian Nation has already made a certain amount of progress towards self-government through the collective will of its people. It must, therefore, for its very existence make a supreme effort, in the shortest possible time, to wipe out mass illiteracy which will otherwise endanger the very form of Government which the people are trying so hard to develop. Since the advent of the new Provincial Governments, the desire to promote the spread of literacy has become acute; and intense and vigorous efforts are certain to be made by these Governments to achieve the goal. At the threshold of this new era, therefore, it is worthwhile to take a stock of our past and present efforts to promote literacy and examine how far they have succeeded.

The making of a poor nation of more than 350 million souls literate is, no doubt, a colossal task in itself. Apart from this inherent difficulty, there are others which are impeding progress. They are: (1) certain prejudices and obsessions and (2) a consequent feeling of despondency. The obsessions are mainly due to India's political dependence on Great Britain and the desire arising out of that to imitate British ideals, methods and practices, irrespective of the soil out of which they grew and the circumstances in which they could prosper. This has further led to a sort of conservatism arising out of the official unwillingness to test the current methods and practices in the light of the experience of other countries with economic and social environments similar to those of India.

This obsession has naturally brought despondency in its wake. For it requires no genius, either mathematical or financial, to prove that with her present economic resources and on the basis of the present methods and practices, to universalise education in India is wellnigh impossible.

Another cause of the present gloom is traceable to the exaggerated emphasis that is being laid on certain not unavoidable aspects of our educational system, the so-called 'wastage' and 'stagnation'. Much is again made of the alleged lapse into illiteracy of those who leave schools after attaining literacy. These and other similar ideas have gone deep into the minds of some officials of the Educational Departments who have drawn such gloomy pictures of the future prospects of Indian Education that advocates are not wanting who say that all efforts at educational expansion should be stopped forthwith until these (so-called) evils are eradicated.

India has thus to start a nation-wide campaign for achieving mass literacy under auspices which are hardly encouraging. She has, therefore, to proceed with her efforts in the face of indifference, if not active opposition, of those who are wedded to tradition and impatient of advice.

The purpose of this book is to give a message of hope to those who will have the privilege of guiding the destinies of future India, that bad as our educational system has been, it has not been so bad as it is made out to be. The situation is hopeful if only we cease to be guided by the ideals of an advanced nation like England and adopt measures and practices which are more suited to the conditions of our people and the financial resources of our country. This book, therefore, devotes some pages to a critical examination of the available statistical and other data relating to mass education not only of this country, but of other countries as well. In this connection, attention may be specifically drawn to the educational system in the Dutch East Indies. One is impressed not merely with the success of that system, but more particularly by the outlook of those who devised it and have been working it. A brief account of it is given in this book in a separate Note. (*Vide* Appendix A.)

The main basis of the system of mass education in the Dutch East Indies is the three-class school, and nearly 85 per cent of the children receiving elementary education are in these three-class schools. These schools have been successful in promoting literacy on an adequate scale and the administration has nothing but praise for them. It has been shown in this book (Chapter III) that it is the product of the third year class in India that adds to the number of literates according to the Census standard of literacy. But the official prejudice against the system is so great in India that the three-class schools, which abound in the Provinces of Bengal, United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa, are condemned wholesale by the administrations of these Provinces as institutions which make no contribution whatever towards the literacy of these Provinces, a statement which cannot stand critical examination in the light of the Census data. The social and economic background of the Dutch East Indies and of these three Indian Provinces being not very dissimilar, the only reason for wide divergence in the views can be found in the outlook of those who are charged with the administration of education in these two countries.

The view prevailing in India today is that no child can be literate unless he completes the 4th year class of the primary school. In an attempt to find out the validity of this view, an independent statistical inquiry was undertaken which showed that, as in the Dutch East Indies, in India also a child acquires Census literacy if he is able to complete the 3rd year class of a primary school and that he retains it in his after-school life. (*Vide* Chapter V.) The Indian official view about the minimum four-class system necessary for acquiring literacy has

tended to create exaggerated notions of the wastage problem and has been mainly responsible for the undue pessimism about India's capacity to finance schemes of universal primary education.

Another problem which has been largely responsible for the growing despondency about the future of mass education in India is the fear of alleged relapse into illiteracy. Wastage relates to children who leave school before attaining literacy; while relapse relates to those who lose literacy after acquiring it at school. These two factors are quite independent of each other; and yet they are invariably mixed up, making the picture look darker and creating a confusion which has led many to denounce the Indian system in terms which it does not deserve.

The writer has tried to prove that a minimum course of three years of schooling is sufficient to give the Indian pupil literacy as assessed by the Census standard; and for proof, the writer has relied on statistical data collected by Government. His conclusion is supported not only by the practice followed in the Dutch East Indies, but also in the French Indo-China. The literacy statistics of Burma (*vide* p. 114) again point to the same conclusion, viz. that schools with a course shorter than one of four years are very useful to a country whose immediate aim is the liquidation of mass illiteracy. The discouragement of private indigenous schools which imparted such small-range education has been fatal to this ideal, whatever its other achievements may have been. Literacy in India as judged by the Census standard will mainly depend upon the number of pupils who are able to complete the 3rd year class; those who complete the 4th, 5th or a higher class may be better educated, but their number has no relation to the figure of new literates recorded in the Census Reports. Therefore in devising any schemes for the promotion of literacy in India this important fact should never be lost sight of.

II. LITERACY AND ITS PROGRESS

The Indian Census definition of 'literacy' is the ability to write a letter to a friend and to read the answer to it.[1] This definition was first adopted at the Census of 1911. In 1901 the population was divided into two classes, 'Literate' and 'Illiterate'. In that Census no orders as to the degree of proficiency in reading and writing required to satisfy the test of literacy were issued by the Government of India, but the instruction to the enumerators was: "Enter in this column against all persons of whatever age, whether they can or cannot both read and write any language."[2] In some provinces a local test was prescribed. For instance, in the Central Provinces the test laid down was the passing of the Upper Primary School Examination or an equivalent

1. *Census of India, 1921*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 175.
2. *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 291.

qualification. In Madras those only were to be recorded as literate who were able to write a letter to a friend and read his reply. Elsewhere the test seems to have differed, not only from province to province, but also from district to district. In some parts, persons were entered as literate "who could do little more than write their own name and spell out a few printed words".[3]

Prior to 1901, the population was divided in respect of 'education' into three categories, viz. 'Learning', 'Literate' and 'Illiterate'. All those who were under instruction, either at home or at school or college, were entered as 'Learning'; 'Literates' were those who were able both to read and write any language, but who were not under instruction; while 'Illiterates' were those who were neither under instruction nor knew how to read and write.

From 1911 onwards the literacy statistics are strictly comparable. There is, however, one thing to be noted. In the Census Report of 1921, the chapter relating to literacy was entitled 'Literacy'; while in previous years, it was called 'Education'—"a title which might comprehend any range of literary ability from the scrawl of a signature on a cheque to the composition of a political leading article".[4] It may be here stated that the Census authorities have laid down that literates under the age of 5 should not be reckoned as such.

In enumerating literates for Census purposes, no actual test is applied. The enumerator merely asks the question: "Can you read and write a letter?" If the answer to the question is in the affirmative, he is expected to record the person as 'Literate'. Such are his instructions. The question as to what language a person is literate in is not pertinent. Any language will do. It is customary in India to make a special enumeration of literates in English at the time of the Census and the figures are given as 'Literacy in English'.

The Census definition of 'literacy' in India is the ability to read and write a *letter*. A person able to read only but not able to write is not shown as 'Literate' in the Census Reports. The number of those who can decipher the pages of a printed book with more or less difficulty is no doubt much larger.

The question as to how far the literacy statistics recorded at the decennial Census are reliable may now be considered. An answer to it is supplied by the authors of some of the Census Reports themselves.

The author of Census Report (India), 1921, observes as follows: "It is not easy to compute the degree of accuracy which the statistics represent . . . . So far as the human equation is concerned ambition on

3. *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 291.
4. *Census of India, 1921*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 175.

the part of the public to be recorded as literate was probably met by the exclusiveness on the part of the educated enumerator, who had the last word in the matter. In the North-West Frontier Province, where the sword is more respected than the pen, there is said to have been some reluctance on the part of the tribesmen to confess to so unmanly a quality as literacy, while there seems in various provinces to have been an inclination for the Census staff to interpret the simple and practical census criterion in the less elastic terms of a school standard, and to allow literacy only to those who had passed the fourth primary course . . . but on the whole there is a consensus of opinion that the simple criterion laid down was easily understood and sensibly interpreted."[5]

The author of the Burma Census Report, 1931, says: "The instructions for filling in the literacy columns of the enumeration schedule were not difficult to understand and there is no reason to believe that there was any deliberate misrepresentation. In many cases, particularly in rural areas, the persons enumerated would be personally known to the enumerators. It is probable therefore that the enumeration record represents the facts fairly accurately."[6]

The author of the Bengal Census Report, 1931, observes: "Amongst the total population there is a considerable number whose education extends only as far as ability to sign their name and since some degree of pride generally accompanies this accomplishment, there is also a danger that persons possessing it will return themselves as literate. During enumeration proceedings emphasis was laid on this point and directions were circulated that such persons were not to be entered as literate. In any case, however, the tendency exists in equal strength at every enumeration and is not likely on the present occasion to have varied greatly in its intensity, though it is of course possible to hope that the elimination of such persons has been more successfully effected and the accuracy of the returns increased on the present occasion. It is not likely that persons actually illiterate will to any extent claim literacy out of a feeling of shame at their lack of education."[7]

On the whole, therefore, according to responsible authorities competent to pronounce views on the accuracy of the Census literacy figures, it may be safely assumed that the figures of literacy as revealed in the Census Reports are fairly reliable.

It would be of interest to know the definition of 'literacy' obtaining in countries outside India. Detailed information on this point is contained in a Bulletin (No. 4) published by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, U.S.A.[8] It gives the tests or standards of 'illiteracy' as defined by each country for enumerating illiterates.

5. ibid. 6. Part I, p. 159. 7. Part I, p. 316.
8. *Illiteracy in the Several Countries of the World* (1929).

From this could be inferred what each country means by 'literacy' for Census purposes. The following are some of the definitions of 'illiteracy' extant in some countries of the world: (1) inability to read; (2) inability to write; (3) inability to read *and* write; and (4) inability to read and write a letter.

The first definition is adopted by the following countries: Canada, Italy, Poland, Chile, and the Philippine Islands; the second definition obtains in the United States of America and some of the islands and tracts under her influence; the third is to be found in many important countries of the world such as Australia, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, Sweden, Hungary, Spain, Mexico, U.S.S.R., Portugal, the Dutch East Indies and Egypt. The only countries which prescribe the test of inability to read *and* write a *letter* are: India (including Burma), Ceylon and the British Malaya—all under the control of the British. Nowhere else is this test applied.

Writing about India, the Bulletin observes: "As between the illiteracy rates published for the United States and those for India, the latter are undoubtedly more reliable. The definition of literacy in India sets a higher standard and in its very nature requires a more careful application."[9]

Even as far back as 1901, the standard of attainment for literacy in India was somewhat higher compared to that in some other parts of the British Empire. This can be seen from the following statement appearing in the Census of the British Empire, 1901: "The very low proportion of persons in the Indian Empire returned as able to read and write, although doubtless mainly due to a real lack of education, is also to a slight extent due to somewhat higher standard that was required there as compared with some other parts of the Empire."[10]

According to the figures supplied in the Bulletin on 'Illiteracy' referred to above, among the several parts of the British Empire for which percentages of illiteracy are given therein, India shows the highest percentage. The only part of the Empire that comes nearer to India is that tract of South Africa which is inhabited by the Bantus. The Indian figure is 90.5 (for ages above 10)[11] and the Bantu figure stands at 90.3 (all ages). If the figures are reduced to a common basis, the Bantu figure of illiteracy will be substantially lower than the one for India.

The Fourteenth Census of U.S.A. (1920), Vol. II, Population, gives not only the definition of 'illiteracy' as laid down for the Census, but it makes a significant observation as to the meaning of the figures and their value to the nation: "Illiteracy, as defined by the Census Bureau, signifies inability to write in any language, regardless of ability to read.

9. ibid., p. 3. 10. p. lv. 11. The Bulletin, p. 36.

. . . In general, the illiterate population as shown by the Census figures should be understood as comprising only those persons who have had no education whatever. Thus the statistics do not show directly or definitely the proportion of population which may be termed illiterate when the word is used to imply lack of ability to read and write with a reasonable degree of facility; but they do afford a fairly reliable measure of the effect of the improvement in the educational opportunities from decade to decade." [12]

The Bulletin on 'Illiteracy' referred to above makes the following interesting observations on the value of statistics of illiteracy: "Illiteracy statistics form one of the several indices used in the science of demography to measure roughly the degree of a people's culture. They indicate to a considerable extent the effectiveness of its school system, the pride which the race in question takes in its language and literature, and its determination to open to all its citizenry the medium of written communication. They reflect the national attitude towards the education of women, indigenous peoples, and minority groups; the enforcement of compulsory education laws; and the general progress of educational policies. They are of use to the administrator in formulating policies of government. They are in a definite sense an indication of a country's financial and economic status. They are a valuable supplement to the more detailed and more frequently gathered statistics of education published annually or biennially by most countries." [13]

Whether India should adopt a Census definition of 'literacy' which is stricter than what obtains in most of the countries of the world is a question for India to decide. However, when India is compared with other nations of the world from the point of view of literacy and its progress from decade to decade, the fact that the Indian definition is far stricter should not be lost sight of.

The first systematic Population Census of India was taken in 1881 and this was followed subsequently by a regular decennial enumeration. Although as already stated the Census Literacy Statistics after 1911 cannot strictly be compared with those for previous years, a rough comparison could certainly be made. The following statement will show the rate of progress of literacy in India: [14]

Year	Percentage of Literacy
1881	3.5
1891	4.6
1901	5.3
1911	5.9
1921	7.3
1931	8.0

12. p. 1145. 13. p. 1.
14. The figures are for all persons of all ages and they relate to the whole of the Indian Empire (including Burma).

It will be seen that literacy in India rose in the 50 years between 1881 and 1931 from 3.5 to 8.0 per cent, recording roughly a rise of 1 per cent per decade. That the rate of progress of literacy is very slow is a fact which cannot be challenged. It is needless to say that if we allow ourselves to go ahead at the same pace or even at a somewhat accelerated one, years will elapse before India can claim a fairly satisfactory percentage of literacy.

During the last 100 years, the British have given to India a system of education comprising all stages from the Primary to the University. The system is comprehensive enough and India has, in a way, reaped its benefits. From the very beginning, however, the system has been based on ideals and practices foreign to the genius of the Indian people. Throughout these hundred years or till about a decade or two ago, the system was never organically related to the needs of the Indian masses or, in other words, to the goal of securing a reasonable share of education to the great bulk of the Indian people. The policy dominating the system for over three quarters of a century was to educate the 'classes' and it was believed that when the 'classes' were educated they would carry down the 'culture' to the 'masses' by the natural process of 'filtration'. The 'filtration theory' now stands exploded. Left to themselves the classes are not disposed to impart their knowledge and culture to the masses. This was realised long ago in England and other countries, and as a result the States undertook the task of educating the masses. Compulsory education laws were enacted and enforced, and the States concerned spent money freely and liberally over schemes of mass education. The process was so quick and so effective that within a generation the masses were educated to the prescribed minimum standard of education. Then began the process of assimilation and consolidation and the prescription of higher standards of minimum education for the masses.

In India, however, till about the beginning of the second decade of the present century, the idea of mass education was never before the mind of the Government. The credit of first launching the idea of mass education in India goes to the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale who, in his striking speeches in the then Central Legislative Council in the years 1910-11, roused the conscience of the Government and the people to the need of a wide campaign of mass education and consequent promotion of mass literacy. Although his efforts were not immediately rewarded, they were not without their effect. By 1920 or thereabout, the various Indian Provinces passed or were preparing to enact laws of compulsory education with a view to accelerating the pace of mass education. At present there is hardly a province in India which has not put on its Statute Book some kind of measure for compulsory education. And yet we are practically where we were so far as mass literacy is

concerned. The percentage of literacy in India in 1921 was about 7; in 1931 it was 8.

Many and varied are the causes which are responsible for this extremely sad state of mass education as revealed by the very low percentage of literacy. Of them financial difficulty is, no doubt, the most formidable one. More literates means more children in schools which in its turn requires more money to be spent on them. It is not, however, proposed to discuss here this financial aspect of the question. It will serve no useful purpose to present schemes and make suggestions involving vast additional expenditure which the provincial governments are not in a position to undertake at least in the near future. Besides, the anxiety of these governments to spend as much more on education as possible, is so keen that they hardly require to be told to be more liberal in educational expenditure.

It is, however, intended to analyse critically the present internal organisation of the Primary School System with a view to ascertaining its defects which prevent the system from yielding a larger output of literates.

To understand the situation correctly it is necessary to ascertain the number of new literates added to the population during the decade 1921-31. This number will represent the output of literates from the primary schools during the decade. For it is well known that there are hardly any extra-school agencies which produce literates in India; and if there be some, their contribution is insignificant. The next step will be to ascertain what section of pupils attending the primary schools during the decade covers this number of new literates added to the population during that decade. The system of primary education in India throughout the provinces is, on the whole, more or less uniform in its internal organisation. This being so, it would be reasonably expected that the Census literacy standard would be attained by those pupils who could attend a minimum course culminating in the completion of a particular class of the primary school course.

From the Annual Educational Reports for British India as well as for the Provinces, it is possible to find out the number of pupils on the rolls of each of the primary classes during the decade. A certain proportion of this number will represent pupils who may be taken to have completed the course of that particular class. If the number of pupils completing the course of a particular primary class during the decade is found to be approximately equal to the number of new literates added to the population during the decade, then it can be reasonably assumed that the completion of that particular class is the minimum requirement for attaining literacy as judged by the Census standard.

If a numerical measure of the success of the primary schools in point of their capacity to produce new literates is thus obtained, it would

be possible to find out why more pupils do not reach that stage and what measures it would be necessary to adopt to make them reach that stage, so that the rate of progress of literacy may be accelerated.

III. SCHOOLS AND LITERACY: BRITISH INDIA

One important fact must be taken into account in the investigation of the correlation between the literacy statistics of the Census and the Educational statistics of British India, namely, that till recently, Burma formed a part of British India. It should be noted, however, that Burma's literacy problem is somewhat peculiar. Burma led all the Provinces of India in literacy. Burma's percentage of literacy in 1931 was 31.3, while that of British India was only 8.2. Again, primary schools in Burma conducted under the Government system of education contribute only a small proportion of the literates produced in Burma, the monastic schools being the main agencies for their production.

Now that Burma has been separated from British India, the 1941 Census literacy statistics of British India will exclude those of Burma. It would, therefore, be of interest to examine the earlier Census statistics for British India (excluding Burma):

	Population (in lakhs)		
	1911	1921	1931
1. British India (including Burma) ..	2443	2470	2715
2. Burma ..	121	132	147
3. British India (excluding Burma) ..	2322	2338	2568

	Literates (in lakhs)		
	1911	1921	1931
1. British India (including Burma) ..	153	185	225
2. Burma ..	27	37	46
3. British India (excluding Burma) ..	126	148	179

	Percentage of Literacy (all ages)		
	1911	1921	1931
1. British India (including Burma) ..	6.2	7.6	8.2
2. Burma ..	22.3	28.0	31.3
3. British India (excluding Burma) ..	5.4	6.3	6.9

It will be seen from the foregoing table that in 1931, British India (excluding Burma) had 6.9 per cent literacy, although the inclusion of Burma raised the percentage to 8.2. With Burma, British India had 6.9 per cent literacy in about 1915; without Burma that figure was reached in 1931. India had thus an apparent advantage of about 15 years' progress simply because Burma happened to be linked with it in point of literacy statistics.

Burma thus holds a peculiar position in literacy. In trying to correlate Census and Educational figures for British India so far as literacy is concerned, Burma must be excluded, in order to eliminate the number of literates produced by the extra-departmental agencies which Burma has in great numbers in its monastic schools.

It is necessary to find out how many new literates were added during the decade 1921-31 in British India (excluding Burma). There were in 1921 in British India (excluding Burma) 148 lakhs of literate persons of all ages. Their number rose in 1931 to 179 lakhs. Thus, there was an increase of 31 lakhs of literates during the decade. But this number is the net increase. The gross increase must be far greater. From the 148 lakhs of literates of 1921, some must have died during the decade. The death-rate among literates of all ages comes to about 23 per cent during a period of ten years.[15] Out of 148 lakhs of literates recorded in 1921, 23 per cent, i.e. about 34 lakhs, must have died, their places being taken up by the new literates produced during the decade. The output of new literates during the decade must, therefore, have been 65 (31+34) lakhs. During the ten years of the decade 1921-31, the actual number of new literates produced must have been greater than 65 lakhs, to allow for deaths among them. Taking 5 per cent [16] as the death-rate during a decade among the new literates, and applying that rate to the number (65 lakhs), the actual number of new literates produced during the decade 1921-31 would be about 68 lakhs.[17]

It thus appears that during the decade 1921-31, British India proper produced about 68 lakhs of new literates. As there were hardly any extra-school agencies producing literates, it may be assumed that almost all of the 68 lakhs of new literates were the product of the primary schools.

It is seen that out of the 68 lakhs of new literates produced during the decade 1921-31, about 34 lakhs had to fill up the gaps caused by deaths among the literates of 1921 and about 3 lakhs of the new literates died during the decade. Thus death alone claimed 37 lakhs. More-

15. *Vide* Appendix B. 16. ibid.

17. In some of the calculations made hitherto to correlate Census with Educational statistics, the death-rate factor is either neglected or not properly accounted for (*vide* Appendix C).

over, owing to the natural growth of the population during the decade which is not less than 10 per cent, about 15 lakhs of the new literates were required to keep up in 1931 the literacy percentage of 1921. Thus 52 out of 68 lakhs of new literates, or nearly 76 per cent of them, were as good as lost, so far as the actual percentage increase of literates was concerned, owing to the very high death and birth rates prevailing in this country.

In countries like England and others where the birth and death rates are lower, the corresponding percentage of new literates required to meet the deficiencies due to deaths and births is comparatively smaller than that in India. The peculiar circumstance of our country over which the educational system has no control, and whereby a very large number of new literates is required merely to fill up the gaps, is responsible, not to a small extent, for the slow growth of literacy from decade to decade, apart from other causes which may be within the control of the educational administration.

The question of literacy statistics presented in the Census Reports has been dealt with. Now the Educational Reports may be scanned and conclusions about literacy statistics deducible from them be presented.

It is possible to get from the Educational Reports—both for India and for the Provinces—the number of pupils who were on the rolls of a particular class or standard of the primary schools at the end of each educational year, i.e. on March 31st. If it is found that the number of pupils who have completed a particular class or standard (calculating backwards from higher to lower classes) during the ten years 1922-31, comes to about 68 lakhs which, as it is seen, must have been the total number of new literates produced during the decade to give us the actual number of literates recorded in the 1931 Census, it may reasonably be assumed that the completion of that particular class or standard gives literacy as laid down in the Census definition.

Various opinions are expressed regarding the class, the completion of which gives literacy, as defined for Census purposes. Some hold that the completion of the 5th year class of a primary course gives literacy. Others, and their number is large, consider that the completion of the 4th year class gives literacy; while a few are of the opinion that the completion of the 3rd year course gives literacy.[18]

From the Educational Reports it is possible to ascertain the number of pupils on the rolls of each of the primary school classes during each year and the total number for that class in a decade. But this total number represents the gross figure of pupils whose names were on rolls at the end of each official school year, i.e. on the 31st of March. It is

18. *Vide* Appendix C.

well known that owing to retardation or stagnation, a good many pupils have to repeat attendance in a class for a year or more. The names of such pupils will be found two or three years in succession in the same class and thus the total number of pupils found to be on the rolls of a class during a decade would include 'repeaters'. The total number is, therefore, the gross number and it is only by eliminating the 'repeaters' that it is possible to get the net number of pupils who have been on the rolls in a particular class for one year only. This number is, therefore, the proper number of individual pupils which can be taken for finding out a correlation between Census and Educational statistics. This important factor of 'repeaters' does not seem to have been considered in some of the calculations that have been made for correlating the Census and Educational statistics.[19]

It is not easy to ascertain the proportion of 'repeaters' in the total number of pupils on rolls of a particular class during the period of ten years, because the Educational Reports for the years 1922-31 for British India do not contain this information.

It is, however, possible to get an approximate number of pupils who are promoted from a particular class to a higher class in each of the ten years of the decade. This number of promoted pupils will obviously exclude the 'repeaters'; for the name of a pupil who is once promoted is never repeated on the roll of the class from which he is promoted to the next higher class. Again, the number of promoted pupils is approximately equal to the number of pupils who have completed successfully the course of that class. But even this number of promoted pupils for the whole of British India or for all the Provinces cannot be obtained directly, because such figures are not available. The only Educational Reports which give this information are the Annual Reports of the D.P.I., Bombay. And thus the only way by which to arrive at the number of promoted pupils from a particular class is to find out the percentage of promoted pupils in the Bombay schools and then to apply it to the figures for British India.

This may not be the best method; but it is the only method possible. Bombay is considered to have a good system of primary education compared to most other Provinces, especially in its high percentage of pupils going up from class to class. Hence the application of the Bombay percentages of promoted pupils will not lead to over-estimates.

In order to ascertain the number of literates sent out by schools during the inter-censal period (1921 to 1931), let it be assumed that the literates produced by schools in 1921 were counted in the Census of that year. The first year for counting new literates will, therefore, be 1922. Just as in 1921, so in 1931 also, the literates produced in that year

19. *Vide* Appendix C.

(1931) are assumed to have been counted in the 1931 Census. On these assumptions the ten years from 1922 to 1931 are taken for the purposes of the following calculations based on Bombay figures:[20]

Class	Total number of pupils on roll, 1922–31 (000)	Total number of pupils promoted, 1922–31 (000)
2nd Year Class (called I Std.)	1716	1017 (59%)
3rd Year Class (called II Std.)	1460	831 (57%)
4th Year Class (called III Std)	1148	666 (58%)
5th Year Class (called IV Std.)	922	478 (52%)

In the above statement it is seen that the percentage of pupils promoted from the 4th year to the 5th year class is 58. This may now be applied to the British Indian figures (excluding Burma). In the British Indian Provinces (excluding Burma) there were, in the period 1922-31, 73,28,000 pupils on the roll in the 4th year class. On the above basis, the number of promoted pupils comes to 42,50,000.

Thus, if the completion of the 4th year class was necessary for the acquisition of Census literacy, there would have been only 43 lakhs of new literates produced by the schools during the decade. It is well known that there were hardly any other agencies than schools which could produce literates. And yet, as has already been shown, the Census figures postulate the number of new literates to be about 68 lakhs. The divergence between the two figures is so great that the assumption, viz. that the completion of the 4th year class is necessary for the acquisition of literacy, is not justified by the Census figures.

If no correlation is established by taking the figures of the 4th year class, there is no need to consider the figures of the 5th year class at all. However, for the sake of confirmation of this statement, it may be stated that in British India (excluding Burma) there were on the rolls of the 5th year class 41,57,000 pupils. Assuming that there were no 'repeaters' at all and that every pupil who was on the roll of the 5th year class became literate, it is found that this number (41,57,000) is far below 68 lakhs given by the Census figures. We need not, therefore, consider at all the suggestion that the completion of the 5th year class is necessary for the acquisition of literacy.

One has, therefore, to go below the 4th year class and take the figures of the 3rd year class for finding out whether any correlation exists between the Census and the Educational figures of literacy.

20. *Vide* Appendix D(ii).

It is seen from the statement given above that in Bombay, during the decade 1922 to 1931, 57 per cent of the total number of the pupils in the 3rd year class were found fit for promotion to the 4th year class. The total number of pupils in the 3rd year class in schools in British India (excluding Burma) was 1,08,69,000, 57 per cent of this number comes to about 62 lakhs. It has already been seen that the Census figures show a total output of 68 lakhs of new literates during the decade 1922-31. The figures are so close that it may be safely stated that there exists a very close correlation between the Census and the Educational figures, if it is assumed that the completion of the 3rd year class gives literacy according to the Census standard.

To make sure of the above assumption, it would be desirable to examine similarly the figures for the 2nd year class. In British India (excluding Burma) there were about 150 lakhs of pupils on the rolls of the 2nd year class during the years 1922 to 1931. Applying the Bombay percentage of promoted pupils which is 59, it is found that out of the 150 lakhs of pupils, 89 lakhs were promoted during the decade. This number (89 lakhs) is far greater than the number of new literates (68 lakhs) yielded by the Census figures, and hence it is not necessary to go below the 3rd year class for determining the class that gives literacy as required by the Census standard.

The following table gives a summary of the above discussion:

British India (excluding Burma)

(in lakhs)

Class	Pupils on roll during the decade 1922–31	Pupils promoted	Number of new literates yielded by the Census figures
5th year ..	42	22	
4th year ..	73	43	**68**
3rd year ..	109	**62**	
2nd year ..	150	89	

A glance at the above table shows that the only figure of promoted pupils which is nearest to the figure of new literates deduced from the Census statistics is the one (62 lakhs) representing pupils who had completed the 3rd year class. Other assumptions, viz. the completion of the 5th year class or the 4th year class being necessary for the acquisition of Census literacy, are not borne out by the above investigation.

The method adopted above is on the lines of those adopted by other writers for correlating the Literacy and Educational statistics. The calculations are only indicative. They need not be taken to interpret

the situation too literally. They indicate that the Census literacy is attained not only by persons who have completed the 4th and 5th year classes, but also by a large number of those who have not gone up beyond the 3rd year class in schools. This will be clear from the fact that in the above calculations the number of persons who have completed the 3rd year class but not the 4th year class is more or less the same as that required to make up the Census figure of new literates in addition to that of persons who have completed the 4th year class. It may, therefore, be reasonably assumed that the completion of the 3rd year class is the minimum necessary for the acquisition of literacy as required by the Census standard.

IV. SCHOOLS AND LITERACY: THE PROVINCES

In the preceding chapter it has been shown that in British India as a whole the Census standard of literacy is acquired by a pupil if he is able to complete the course of the third year primary class. The calculations made were based mainly on the percentages of pupils promoted to pupils 'on roll'. The systems of Primary Education in the various Indian Provinces differ from one another in certain respects. The number of classes in primary schools and the length of the primary course vary from Province to Province. The following table shows the number of classes in primary schools in different Provinces during the decade 1922-31:[21]

Number of Classes in Primary Schools by Provinces

Province	Lower Elementary Schools	Higher Elementary Schools
Madras ..	5	8 (5+3)
Bombay ..	5*	8 (5+3)
Bengal ..	3*	5 (3+2)
U.P. ..	3*	5 (3+2)
B. & O. ..	3	5 (3+2)
Punjab ..	..	4
C.P. ..	..	4
Assam ..	2	4 (2+2)
Burma ..	2*	4 (2+2)

The table shows that Bombay and Madras have a continuous minimum primary course of five years. The length of such a course in Bengal, U.P. and B. & O. is the same; but these three Provinces have

21. Hartog Committee Report, p. 36.

* In these Provinces the lowest class is styled as 'Infants' and the remaining classes as I, II, etc.

also a lower stage of three years. In these Provinces there are several primary schools which teach only the first three years' course. The difference between Bombay and Madras on the one hand, and Bengal, U.P. and B. &. O. on the other, is that the former Provinces have one continuous stage of five years, and if there is only one teacher in a primary school, he will have usually to teach five classes; while in the latter Provinces, a teacher in a one-teacher primary school has, in most cases, to teach three classes only. There is also another type of school where over and above the course for three years there is an additional course of two years. In the Punjab and C.P. the primary course is a continuous one of four years and if there is a single teacher in charge of a school he has usually to teach four classes. In the C.P. it appears that a one-teacher school has three classes also. Like Bombay and Madras, these two Provinces had, some years ago, a continuous course of five years; but they changed it into a four years' continuous course. In the case of Assam and Burma, the four-year primary course is again divided into two stages of two years each, but details regarding the division are not easily available.

These differences in the structure of the primary course of instruction have, no doubt, influenced the progress of literacy attained by each Province. It would be desirable to take into account these differences in establishing a correlation between the Educational and Census statistics of literacy in the case of each Province taken separately.

A somewhat detailed enquiry into the correlation between the Census and Educational statistics in various Provinces may now be made in the light of figures given in Statements A, B and C:

STATEMENT A

Showing the number (in thousands) of new literates produced during the decade 1921 to 1931

Province (1)	Literates in 1921 (2)	Literates in 1931 (3)	Increase in literates (Col 3—2) (4)	Deaths among literates of 1921 at 23 per cent for the decade (5)	New literates produced in the decade and living in 1931 (Col 4+5) (6)	New literates produced during the decade including those living in 1931 and those who died during the decade Death rate 5 per cent (7)
Madras ..	3622	4319	697	833	1530	1611
Bombay ..	1646	2003	357	379	736	775
Bengal ..	4255	4694	439	979	1418	1493
U.P. ..	1689	2260	571	388	959	1009
B. & O. ..	1586	1704	118	365	483	508
C.P. ..	633	868	235	146	381	401
Punjab ..	833	1248	415	192	607	639

STATEMENT B

Showing the number (in thousands) of promoted pupils during the decade 1921 to 1931 from the (1) 3rd year class and (2) 4th year class

Province	From 3rd Year Class		From 4th Year Class	
	Pupils on roll from 1922 to 1931	Pupils promoted to the higher class at 57% of Col. 2	Pupils on roll from 1922 to 1931	Pupils promoted to the higher class at 58% of Col. 4
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Madras ..	2943	1678	2225	1291
Bombay ..	1460	832	1148	666
Bengal ..	2274	1296	1063	617
U.P. ..	1354	772	980	568
B. &. O. ..	1155	658	578	335
C.P. ..	594	339	499	289
Punjab ..	986	562	774	449

STATEMENT C

Giving the summary of Statements A and B (in thousands)

Province	New literates produced during the decade 1921-31 (Census figures)	New literates produced if 3rd year class gives literacy (1921-31)	New literates produced if 4th year class gives literacy (1921-31)
Madras ..	1611	1678	1291
Bombay ..	775	832	666
Bengal ..	1493	1296	617
U.P. ..	1009	772	568
B. & O. ..	508	658	335
C.P. ..	401	339	289
Punjab ..	639	562	449

Statement A.—Shows the number of new literates produced in each Province during the decade 1921-31, on the assumption that 23% of the old literates die during the decade and a further 5% of the new literates die during the same period.

Statement B.—Shows the number of new literates produced by schools during the ten years 1922-31, in each Province: (1) on the assumption that the completion of the 3rd year class gives literacy and (2) on the assumption that completion of the 4th year class gives literacy. In determining the number fit for promotion to a higher class, the percentages adopted are 57 and 58 respectively, on the analogy of the figures calculated for Bombay.

Statement C.—Shows in a comparative form the results of Statements A and B.

BOMBAY

It is seen from Statement C that, taking the completion of the 4th year class as necessary for the acquisition of Census literacy, only 6,66,000 persons would have attained literacy. In order to account for the difference of 1,09,000 (7,75,000 — 6,66,000) between the new literates given by the Census figures and those from the 4th year class, some of those who have completed the 3rd year class, but not the 4th year class, have to be included among the Census literates. The number of pupils who have completed the 3rd year but not the 4th year class during the decade comes to 1,66,000 (8,32,000 — 6,66,000). It is thus seen that not only all pupils who complete the 4th year class, but 66 per cent of those who complete the 3rd year class but not the 4th year class, have attained literacy as required by the Census standard.

The contention that in Bombay a certain proportion of the literates recorded in the Census had gone up only to the 3rd year class is further supported by another set of figures. The 1921 Bombay Census Report shows 79,000 literate persons between the ages 5-10. These very young literates almost without exception must be children attending primary schools at the time of the Census. The D.P.I.'s Report for the year 1920-21 gives figures of pupils in the age-group 5-10 reading in several school classes about two months after the Census date. The figures are as follows:

1st Year Class (Infants Std.)	2nd Year Class (I Std.)	3rd Year Class (II Std.)	4th Year Class (III Std.)	5th Year Class and above
2,82,000	1,01,000	65,000	37,000	16,000

These figures show that the literates (79,000) enumerated in the Census can be accounted for if we take *all* pupils in the 4th year class and above (53,000) and 26,000 from those not reading in these classes. It is not probable that a fair number of these could have been from the pupils who have left the school earlier in the previous decade. Almost the whole number, therefore, must be taken to have been contributed by pupils of that age-group (5-10) actually reading in the lower classes in 1921. Naturally it must be assumed that they come from the 3rd year rather than from the 2nd year class. The total number of pupils in the 3rd year class of ages 5 to 10 as given above was 65,000, and 26,000 of them gives a percentage of 40. This means that in the year 1921, 40

per cent of the pupils in the 3rd year class and between ages 5 and 10 were actually counted as literates by the Census enumerators. The total number of pupils in the 3rd year class above 10 years of age in 1921 was 63,000. If 40 per cent of the very young children between 5 and 10 years of age are counted as literates by the Census enumerators, it is quite probable that they would take a larger proportion as literates from those of ages 10 and over; and therefore the percentage of pupils reading in the 3rd year class taken as literates by the Census enumerators must be much larger.

The Census figures of 1921, therefore, very clearly show that in Bombay not only all pupils reading in the 4th year class were recorded as literates, but a substantial proportion from the 3rd year class was also counted as such. It follows that even in Bombay where literacy is acquired at a little later stage than in other Provinces, a substantial number of those who complete the 3rd year class but not the 4th year class are recorded as literates by the Census enumerators.

MADRAS

From the Statement B it is seen that the Madras figures show a close correlation between the Census and Educational statistics of literacy on the assumption that the completion of the 3rd year class gives literacy within the meaning of the Census definition. The respective figures stand in the proportion of 16 : 17, on the assumption that the average percentage of pupils found fit for promotion to the higher class is the same as that obtained in Bombay, i.e. 57. If this percentage is lower in Madras, then even some of the 2nd year class pupils would be found among the Census literates. If it is higher, the class giving literacy will be somewhere between the 3rd and 4th year classes. In the Census year 1931, there were 2,53,000 literates of ages 5 to 10 in Madras. The total number of pupils in the same age-group and reading in the 3rd year class and above was 2,23,000. In order to cover all literates of 5-10 given in the Census Report not only all pupils reading in the 3rd year class must have been taken as literates, but nearly 10 per cent of those in the 2nd year class.

BENGAL

Bengal presents a typical case in most respects. A glance at the Bengal figures (*vide* Statement A) shows that the question of taking the 4th year class pupils for purposes of determining the minimum class that gives literacy need not be considered at all. For, while the Census figures reveal that the number of new literates added in the decade was 14,93,000, the *total* number of pupils in the 4th year class during the decade (1922-31) was only 10,63,000. It is, therefore, necessary to take the 3rd year class figures to find out a correlation between the

Census and Educational figures. Assuming that 57 per cent of the total pupils in the 3rd year class are fit for promotion, the number of such pupils would come to 13 lakhs, while the number of new literates is 15 lakhs. The correlation, although not unsatisfactory, is not quite good. Two conclusions follow from this. Either Bengal has a higher percentage of 3rd year class pupils promoted to the higher class than in Bombay or the Census enumerators have taken as literates not only those completing the 3rd year class, but even many who have completed the 2nd year class only. Which of the two conclusions is nearer the truth cannot be definitely ascertained in the absence of the knowledge of the precise percentage of pupils promoted from the 3rd year to the 4th year class in Bengal.

This feature revealed by the Bengal figures, viz. that literacy is attained in the 3rd year class is not fortuitous. It is due, probably, to the fact that in Bengal, unlike Bombay and Madras, the primary school system is divided into two stages—one, lower, comprising the first three classes and the other, upper, comprising the next two classes. There is a large number of lower primary schools in that Province teaching the first three classes only. Nearly 50 per cent of the pupils reading in the 3rd year class leave school for good.

This fact, viz. that in a large number of schools a three-year course is looked upon as a complete unit of education, would appear to influence the teaching in these schools to such an extent that large numbers of pupils who leave them without ever attending a further course, do really complete the 3rd year class, acquire literacy as prescribed by the Census standard and figure so in the Census Records.

This particular organization of the primary system seems to have been responsible for the phenomenon that from 1911 to 1931 Bengal has recorded the highest percentage of literacy among all the major Provinces of India. For there do not seem to be any other features, either of the course of primary education or of its organization, of the birth-rate or death-rate, to account for this continuous lead of Bengal over the other Provinces.

UNITED PROVINCES

In this Province, as in the case of Bengal, the question of the completion of the 4th year class being necessary for the acquisition of literacy does not arise. The total number of pupils reading in the 4th year class as shown on the rolls during the decade 1922-31 was 9,80,000; while the estimated number of new literates produced during the decade in the Province was 10,09,000. It is seen from Statement B that applying the Bombay percentage of promotions to the 3rd year class, the number of promoted pupils from that class is 7,72,000, which, as is seen,

is rather too low to establish a reasonable correlation with the estimated figure of literates (10,09,000) from the Census data.

The phenomenon is thus analogous to that of Bengal, and as in Bengal it may be due to two causes: (1) the percentage of promoted pupils from the 3rd year class may be far greater in U.P. than in Bombay or (2) the Census literacy standard is attained by many pupils who complete the 2nd year class. There is reason to believe that the first of these causes is the more plausible of the two.

Mr. S. N. Chaturvedi, in his admirable book—" An Educational Survey of a District " (Etawah in U.P.)—gives the examination results of boys' schools in Etawah for 1928.[22] The total number covered by the enquiry was about 20,000. In the 3rd year class, out of 2,593 pupils on roll, 2,142 passed, giving a percentage of 82 while the percentage for the same year for the whole of the Bombay Presidency was 63. If it is assumed that the Etawah District represents a fair sample for the whole of U.P. and further, that the percentage for 1928 is approximately the same for the decade 1922-31, it will be seen that the number of promotions from the 3rd year class is far larger and approximates the estimated number of literates from the Census data. The number of pupils in the 3rd year class in U.P. during the decade was 13,54,000, 82 per cent of this is 11,10,000; while the Census figures give the number of new literates as 10,09,000. The correlation is good. Anyhow, as in Bengal, so in U.P., it can safely be said that the Census literacy is attained by pupils completing the 3rd year class; and the remarks about the three-year class schools and their utility in the matter of promoting literacy made in regard to Bengal apply *mutatis mutandis* to U.P.

BIHAR AND ORISSA

A glance at Statement B shows that the case of Bihar and Orissa is somewhat like that of Bombay. The figures of literates deduced from the 4th year class pupils (3,35,000) is low enough if compared to the number of Census literates (5,08,000). On the other hand, the number of pupils promoted from the 3rd year class (6,58,000), on the basis of the Bombay percentage, is far higher than the Census figure of new literates. As Bihar and Orissa shares with Bengal and U.P. a three-year class system of lower primary stage, one would expect the Bihar and Orissa figures to be on the lines of those of Bengal and U.P. But actually they are not so.

It is suggested above that the peculiar organization of primary education of Bengal and U.P. succeeds in turning out a larger percentage of promotions from the 3rd year class or a larger number of literates. The Bihar and Orissa system being analogous, the number of those

---

22. p. 176.

promoted from the 3rd year class or the number of new literates turned out from that class ought to be larger than the figure given above (6,58,000) on the basis of the Bombay percentage. Under the circumstances, if it can be proved that the percentage of promotions in Bihar and Orissa primary schools is rather low compared to Bengal and U.P., and even compared to Bombay, it may be reasonably concluded that there are some factors in the Bihar and Orissa system which make its working less efficient. As it is, there is sufficient evidence to show that the percentage of promotions in Bihar and Orissa, not only from the 3rd year class, but in all probability of pupils from other classes also, is substantially lower than in Bombay. The D.P.I.'s Report for Bihar and Orissa for the years 1922-27 says[23] that in Chota-Nagpur, out of the 91,000 pupils in the first class, 61 per cent were 'repeaters', 34 per cent for two or more years, and 27 per cent for more than a year. This appears to show that the promotions from that class must be smaller than in Bombay. In the Hartog Committee Report it is stated[24] that in Bihar (i.e. Bihar and Orissa) only 57,000 pupils out of 1,25,000 passed from the 3rd year class, giving a percentage of 46. Applying this percentage to the number of pupils (11,55,000) on the roll of the 3rd year class in 1922-31, the figure of passes or promoted pupils from that class comes to 5,31,000 as against 5,08,000 new literates given by the Census data.

C.P. AND THE PUNJAB

The cases of the C.P. and the Punjab in which for some years past the primary school course has been brought down from five years to one of four years may now be considered. This four years' course is a continuous course without any further division into lower and higher stages. In both of these Provinces a glance at Statement B shows that the Census figures of new literates exceed the figures of literates yielded by calculations based on the 3rd year class. In the Punjab the number of promotions from the 3rd year class on the basis of the Bombay percentage is seen from Statement B to be 5,62,000, which is smaller than the estimated number of new literates from Census figures by 77,000. One speciality of the Punjab during this decade was an attempt at promotion of literacy among the adult illiterates. This effort is said to have produced 30,000 new adult literates during the decade. It is thus seen that the real difference between the number of Census Literates and the number promoted from the 3rd year class is so small that for such calculations it can be neglected.

Moreover, if in the Punjab the percentage of promoted pupils to the total number on rolls in the 3rd year class is greater than in Bombay, the difference will be almost wholly eliminated and the correlation

23. p. 76.

24. p. 48.

between the Census and Educational statistics will be well established on the basis of the 3rd year class being the class which gives literacy. In the absence of Educational statistics on this point, one may refer to the Punjab Census Report, 1931,[25] in which the writer of the Report assumes 66 per cent of the 4th year class pupils on the roll as fit to be styled as literates for Census purposes. The basis on which this calculation is made is not known. If it is assumed that the writer of the Census Report has in view the successful completion of the 4th year class when he speaks of literates for Census purposes, then it may be taken that in his opinion the percentage of promotions from the 4th year class in the Punjab schools is 66. The Bombay percentage for this class is 58. The Punjab percentage is higher by 8 than that of Bombay. If this difference in the percentage for the 4th year class is supposed to hold good for promotions from the 3rd year class, the Bombay percentage of promotions from the 3rd year class which is 57 will have to be raised by about 8 to get at the approximate percentage of promotions from the 3rd year class in the Punjab schools. Applying this corrected percentage (65) to the Punjab data, it is found that the number of pupils promoted from the 3rd year class comes to 6,41,000, thus yielding a nearer approximation to the Census figure of literates.

Returning to the Central Provinces, one finds that if calculations are made on the assumption that the 3rd year class pupils do attain literacy, the figure arrived at falls short of the estimated figure of new literates from the Census data by about 62,000. The proportion between the two figures is 100 : 85. Two assumptions are possible to account for this. Either the percentage of promoted pupils from the 3rd year class may be more than 57 or the C.P. enumerators may be taking some of the 2nd year class pupils also as literates. There seems to be no doubt that in the C.P. the Census standard of literacy is acquired by a larger proportion of pupils in the 3rd year class than in other Provinces. The teaching of reading and writing in the C.P. seems to be more effective, culminating in sending out a larger percentage of literates from the 3rd year class.

A guess may be hazarded to account for this peculiarity of the C.P. From the Hartog Committee Report[26] it is seen that in the C.P. the percentage of single-teacher schools is the lowest (16) among all Provinces of India and further "the majority of the single-teacher schools have only *three* classes",[27] in spite of the general system of four-year primary school prevailing in that Province. The Punjab has the next lowest percentage of single-teacher schools (25), but there, the single-teacher school has four classes and not three, as in the C.P. It would, therefore, appear that in effectiveness of teaching the essential subjects of a primary course, a teacher with three classes to manage is

---

25. Vol. I, Part I, p. 254. 26. pp. 60-61. 27. ibid., p. 61.

able to put in better work than one who has to teach four classes or one who is saddled with five classes.

TRAVANCORE

Travancore and Cochin lead all the Provinces and States of India in regard to literacy. In 1931 the literacy percentage in Travancore was 24. The literates in 1921 were 9,67,000 and in 1931, 12,18,000. Thus the increase was 2,51,000. Applying a death-rate of 23 per cent for the decade the deaths among the literates in the decade would number 2,22,000. Therefore, the number of new literates living in 1931 would be 2,51,000 plus 2,22,000, i.e. 4,73,000, and of all the new literates produced during the decade, including those that died in the decade, would be 4,98,000.

The total number of pupils on rolls in the 4th year class during the decade 1922-31 was 6,03,000.[28] Applying the standard percentage of 58 adopted upto now for promoted pupils, it is seen that 3,50,000 would be found fit for promotion. The figure 3,50,000 is much less than 4,98,000, and hence one has to look to the 3rd year class for the test of literacy. The total number of pupils on the rolls of the 3rd year class is not available. It is, however, possible to make a rough estimate of the number. The Report[29] gives the proportion of pupils in the 4th year class to the pupils in the 3rd year class as being 14.6 to 21.1. On this basis, the total number of pupils on the roll of the 3rd year class during the decade 1922-31 in Travancore would be 8,70,000 in round figures. Applying the Bombay percentage of promoted pupils, i.e. 57, it is seen that from the 3rd year class the literates produced would be 4,96,000. If the Bombay percentages of promoted pupils were to hold good in Travancore during the decade 1922-31, the Census literacy may be assumed to have been attained by those who have completed the 3rd year class.

While considering the cases of Bengal and U.P. it was observed that the existence of the three-year class school on a very large scale in those provinces has given them a cheaper and quicker agency for producing literates. Travancore has been at the forefront in literacy in India almost from the time of the first Census. It is interesting to enquire, therefore, whether Travancore had ever employed this cheaper and quicker agency of producing literates. Today, Travancore, no doubt, has a four-year system of primary education. Till 1895, however, Travancore had a lower primary course of two classes. From 1895 the two-year lower primary stage was raised to a three-year one (by inclusion of the Infants' class at the bottom). From 1902, the primary school had a two-class lower primary stage and a four-year

28. Report of the Travancore Education Reforms Committee (1933), p. 77.
29. ibid., p. 79.

upper one. The last reshuffling was done in 1909 when the primary school was divided into two grades—the lower grade of four classes and higher one of seven classes. This historical sketch of the primary school system in Travancore shows that till 1909, there was a class of lower primary school which taught only two or three classes and which must have been the most common type of school for the education of the masses in that State.

BURMA

The problem of literacy in Burma is somewhat unique. Burma until 1937 was a part of British India and, although it is now separated, the study of its literacy statistics is highly interesting from many points of view. The system of primary education promulgated by the Government of Burma is just as it is in Bombay. Burma stands head and shoulders above all the other Indian Provinces in point of literacy. In 1931 the percentage was 31.3, as compared to a maximum of 10 of any Indian Province. This high percentage of literacy in Burma is not due to any sound Government system of primary education; for the Burmese system has all the defects of the Indian system as a whole. Nor is the percentage of population in the schools conducted under the Government system higher than, say, in Bombay. In 1932, for instance, the percentage of male population of school-going age receiving instruction in primary classes I to V was 50 for Bombay, 42 for British India and 24 for Burma, in primary schools *recognised by Government.* From this, it will be seen that Burma ought to be far behind Bombay in literacy, if its literacy were to be the concern mainly of the recognised schools in the Province. In Burma, in the decade 1922-31, the following numbers[30] were enrolled in the primary 3rd and 4th year classes in the recognised schools:

5,26,000	..	..	3rd year class
3,30,000	..	..	4th year class

Taking these figures and applying the usual percentages of promotions (57 for the 3rd year class and 58 for the 4th year class), the numbers obtained are 3,00,000 for the 3rd year class and 1,91,000 for the 4th year class, respectively. But the number of new literates added to the population of Burma during the decade 1922-31 comes to about 19,00,000. This shows that not even 20 per cent of the new literates recorded in the Census could be contributed by the Burmese recognised primary schools. It is, therefore, of interest to enquire the source of the remaining 80 per cent of the new literates.

In Burma, there is a large number of monastic schools conducted in temples by Buddhist monks and priests in which, from old times, a

30. The figures are approximate, *vide* Appendix D(iii).

large number of children has been receiving a sort of primary education consisting mainly of the three R's. During recent years, some of these monastic or temple schools have been brought into the official system of primary education by aiding and recognising them. Such schools follow in some respects the officially prescribed curricula. But there are many monastic schools which do not conform to the Government rules and they carry on their work of teaching children in their own way. The importance of these unrecognised monastic schools—however imperfect they may be according to the prescribed standards—can be realised when it is seen that the number of children under instruction in these schools in 1934-35 was about 2,00,000,[31] while the number of children learning in all recognised primary schools was 2,84,000. These monastic schools are so widely spread that they reach 20,000 out of 32,000 villages in Burma. The schools recognised by Government number about 4,500. The effect of this has been that Burma was able to add in the decade 1921-31 new literates to the extent of about 19 lakhs in its population of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ crore, although according to the usual calculations the recognised primary schools would have been able to add new literates numbering about 3 lakhs only. The indigenous schools are, therefore, a great asset to Burma in promoting literacy.

The unrecognised monastic schools retain their pupils for two or three years, within which time they become literate according to the Census standard. They have not to pass examinations and follow a rigidly prescribed course of instruction consisting of the usual staple of a recognised primary school. There is no need for detaining pupils in the same class because of failure to pass a test; for there are no classes, as the school as a whole is one class, each pupil doing his own work according to his ability. There may be very little 'wastage' because the schools are people's schools and the people themselves send the children of their own accord. That is why these twenty thousand schools are able to send out such a large number of literates. This would be absolutely impossible if the usual stagnation and wastage factors were to operate in these schools. The situation can be explained only on one supposition, viz. that every child who enters a monastic school leaves it in a couple of years after attaining literacy as required by the Census standard.

It has been shown above that the three-class primary schools are a great asset in promoting literacy as prescribed by the Census definition. This is particularly so in Bengal and the United Provinces. The official opinion, however, about these schools seems to be different. For instance, the Bengal Quinquennial Report for 1927-32 says in reference to these schools: "In spreading literacy the lower primary schools are almost wholly useless."[32]

---

31. The number seems to be underestimated.
32. p. 24.

The survey of literacy statistics taken in the foregoing pages covers most of the Indian Provinces. Its utility has, however, been slightly marred by the absence of data relating to the percentage of promoted pupils for Provinces other than Bombay. In analysing the literacy data for other Provinces, therefore, the percentage of promotions in Bombay has been applied generally. From a strictly statistical point of view this is not quite correct. But in view of the fact that the Bombay percentage is on the whole on the upward level, there is good reason to believe that the application of the Bombay percentage to the other Provinces does not in any way vitiate the calculations made or the conclusion reached.

V. LAPSE INTO ILLITERACY

In the two previous chapters an attempt was made to establish a correlation between the Census and the Educational statistics of literacy. The conclusions reached were as follows:

(1) The British Indian figures show that the completion of the 3rd year class gives literacy.

(2) In most Provinces literacy is attained with the completion of the 3rd year class or even earlier, and in no case does the completion of the 4th year class fail to impart literacy.

In ascertaining the degree of correlation between the Census and Educational figures, the factor of relapse into illiteracy was not taken into account. In fact it was not even referred to because once this factor was brought into discussion there would have been no end to speculation. The calculations in the previous pages are based on the assumption that when once a person acquires literacy as required by the Census standard, he retains it permanently and that he does not relapse into illiteracy. It has been shown that, in the case of the whole of British India, a child who has been able to put in one year or more in the 3rd year class and has been further able to secure promotion to the 4th year class has attained literacy which does not disappear later. In other words, the practice of reading and writing which he puts in during his three or more years' stay in the school is sufficient to ensure for him the retention of the acquired ability to read and write. His literacy is thus a permanent acquisition.

The statistical discussion in the previous pages relates to a period of 10 years from 1922 to 1931. A certain proportion of those acquiring literacy at the beginning of this period would relapse into illiteracy at the end, if the literacy acquired were of a fleeting nature. That this is not so is proved by the correlation which has been established between the Census and Educational statistics.

To illustrate: The Bombay statistics show that the completion of the 4th year class is the surest guarantee for the acquisition of literacy

in the Census term of the word. So far as the 4th year class is concerned, therefore, there would be absolutely no relapse to be contemplated. But if the completion of the 3rd year class is to give literacy, then it may be necessary to take into account the factor of relapse into illiteracy. On the assumption that in Bombay a pupil who completes the 3rd year class becomes literate in the Census term of the word, it is seen from Statement B that during the decade the schools produced 8,32,000 literates. The Census figures show the addition of 7,75,000 literates. It would, therefore, follow that the difference of 57,000 between the two represents the number which, though rendered literate by schools, lapsed into illiteracy. Thus the lapse comes to about 9 per cent. In Madras, on the same assumption, the percentage of lapse into illiteracy would come to 4. In the case of Bengal, U.P., C.P. and the Punjab, if the completion of the 3rd year class were to give literacy, it would appear from the figures from Statement B that there would be no relapse whatever. If, however, the completion of the 2nd year class were to give literacy, there would no doubt be enough scope for relapse into illiteracy. For British India as a whole, if the completion of the 3rd year class is taken as sufficient for the acquisition of literacy, there is no room for relapse.

Any discussion of mass education in India is not regarded as being complete without a reference to lapse into illiteracy. The question may be considered in its two-fold aspect: (1) the general question of wastage, (2) relapse into illiteracy occurring after attainment of literacy. Relapse means losing a capacity which has been acquired. If the capacity is not acquired, there can be no relapse. For instance, many pupils, who on the completion of the 2nd year class are able to read a simple book tolerably well, have *not* acquired literacy as required by the Census standard. If such pupils were to leave school and have no further opportunities of perfecting their ability to read and write, they would certainly be classed as illiterates for the purpose of the Census. Such cases cannot, however, be regarded as being those of relapse into illiteracy, because such persons did not lose literacy after acquiring it, which fact is the essence of the matter.

The first attempt at making a numerical estimate of the alleged 'lapse into illiteracy' in British Indian schools was made by Sir Henry Sharp in the Progress of Education in India, 1907-12.[33] He took the number of children in the first five classes of primary schools assuming that they would be aged between 5 and 10 years. Comparing the 1912 Educational figures with those of 1911 Census figures, he calculated that for every thousand children of those ages 148 were at school. He further calculated from the 1911 Census figures that 91 per thousand persons between the ages of 15-20 were literates. Thus according to

33. Vol. I, pp. 142-143.

him out of 148 children at school only 91 became literate. Therefore, the lapse into illiteracy came to 39 per cent. It is unnecessary to enter into the merits of these calculations, because the writer himself was conscious of their limitations.

It should be noted that Sir Henry Sharp took *all* the children in schools in the first five classes in a particular year and found that 61 per cent of them were subsequently returned as literates in the Census. Those not so returned and numbering 39 per cent included all who might have left school from the 1st year class onwards. It would appear that most of these children must have left school after attending it for one or two years. Hence such children who had not acquired the requisite standard of literacy while at school cannot be said to have lapsed into illiteracy. The term 'lapse into illiteracy' is used here in a loose sense. It would be more accurate to say that these children left school without attaining literacy, thus causing wastage of money and efforts. But it does not give us any indication as to whether any of those who were rendered literate in schools according to the prescribed standard were returned as illiterate later on.

Another attempt to gauge the extent of 'lapsing into illiteracy' has been made by Mr. K. N. Kini of Mysore in his Report on the Educational Survey in Mysore "just to obtain an estimate of the extent to which people who once received some education in our primary schools lapsed into illiteracy on leaving school and on entering life".[34] Mr. Kini undertook an intensive survey in one village in the Bangalore district. The village had a population of about 1,360 and it had for a long time three schools—one for boys, one for girls and one for Urdu boys. The adults (above 18), who were found to be living in the village at the time of the enquiry, were subjected to a test in reading and writing. The test was confined only to men and women whose names were found on the admission registers of the schools. The time spent by each in school and the class from which the person left school were not considered at all. The result of the enquiry was that out of 532 persons covered, 108 were found to have lapsed into illiteracy, i.e. they were not able to read and write according to the test applied. The percentage of 'lapsing into illiteracy' came to 20 for all persons tested.

The question arises: Had all the persons who were found unable to pass the test become literate when they left school? Assuming that only those who spent a year or more in the 3rd year class had become literate, those who had not reached that stage then could not be regarded as having lapsed into illiteracy. Mr. Kini himself throws some light on this question. He says: "It was found that many of those who became illiterate had not gone beyond the second primary class while at school."[35] Had Mr. Kini given detailed statistics of the educational

34. p. 209. 35. ibid., p. 212

attainments of those covered by his enquiry, a real insight into the question of 'lapsing into illiteracy' might have been obtained. The methods followed by both Sharp and Kini are similar, inasmuch as they do not differentiate between persons of different educational attainments, although the results obtained show a wide divergence. It should be pointed out here that Mr. Kini's is the first systematic attempt in India to ascertain by means of an actual test the percentage of those who, having attended a school, could not satisfy a literacy test later.

The Hartog Committee have observed as follows on the question of 'relapse into illiteracy': "Relapse into illiteracy: The losses due to wastage prevent all but few pupils from becoming literate, but even of these few it is not possible to say with any confidence that many will not rapidly relapse into illiteracy. It is impossible to give figures for such relapse but there is every indication that they are large. It is difficult to correlate at all satisfactorily the Census figures for literacy with the figures for school attendance. But the fact that the number of literates in the age-group 10-15 in the Census of 1921 was approximately only half the number of pupils in the age-group 5-10 at school five years previously indicates not only waste but a rapid relapse into illiteracy."[36]

The Committee's use of the term 'relapse into illiteracy' is the correct one. They have clearly divided the issue into two separate questions: (1) wastage which represents pupils leaving school before attaining literacy and (2) relapse into illiteracy which includes those who lose their literacy after acquiring it at school. It may be mentioned here that in the opinion of the Hartog Committee the minimum for the attainment of (permanent) literacy is the completion of the 4th year class of a primary school.[37] It is not surprising, therefore, that the Committee should have found it difficult to correlate satisfactorily the Census figures for literacy with the figures for school attendance. For it has been already shown that the correlation could be established only on the supposition that the completion of the 3rd year class gives (permanent) literacy and not of the 4th year class, as was assumed by the Committee. The comparison of the Census and Educational statistics referred to by the Committee gives some insight into the extent of wastage only and not at all into that of relapse. It appears the Committee took for granted whatever views were current on the subject of relapse. Wastage and relapse are two entirely different problems. The one must not be confused with the other.

The following extract from the Census Report of Bengal, 1921, is of interest in this connection, as it shows that those who had tried to correlate the Census and the Educational statistics, finding that the Census figures did not reveal any lapse into illiteracy, came to the

36. Hartog Committee Report, pp. 48-49. 37. ibid., p. 45.

conclusion that the Census figures must be inaccurate as they did not bear out their preconceived notion of a large relapse into illiteracy: "An attempt was made to discover the bearing of the census figures on the extent of lapse from literacy, but it proved abortive. The census figures do not in fact indicate that there is any great lapse from literacy in Bengal. The result may be partly explained by the fact that a number of men employed as *durwans* and peons and in other capacities in which they are kept waiting about for long periods without much to occupy them, do teach themselves to read after they have reached maturity. Such persons are the employees of persons who use the art of letters, they realise the advantage of being able to read and write, appreciate the fact that they can only rise higher in the employment of their masters by acquiring some education and take steps to do so. In Eastern Bengal moreover a bearded Muhammadan school boy is not a very uncommon sight, and a class in a vernacular school often includes one or two whose age is half as much again as the average for the class. But still the conclusion is inevitable that the return of literacy in adult ages is not accurate. The man who reached the census standard of literacy when he was at school will not admit that his knowledge has slipped from him, and perhaps, not having tried his hand for a very long time, is quite unconscious that this has happened. The enumerator has not time to examine each person he enumerates, and adults would resent any attempt on his part to do so. He can read and write himself and very often he has known those whom he is to enumerate all his life. He remembers that so and so was at school in the same class as himself or his brothers and assumes that he has retained his knowledge as he himself has retained it. The fact that the prescription of a standard of literacy for the first time at the Census of 1911 made little difference in the proportion of literates over the age of 20, though it made some at earlier ages, points to the probability that the standard is not strictly applied to adults, and the conclusion is inevitable that the Census statistics gravely exaggerate the number of adults who are literate." [38]

Comment on the above extract seems superfluous, as it is obviously a laboured attempt at fitting assumptions with facts and, when the facts do not suit, to call them wrong. That the Census literacy statistics are not so grossly inaccurate as they are made out to be in the Bengal Report, is clear from the following statement of the author of Census of India, 1921: "On the whole there is a consensus of opinion that the simple criterion laid down was easily understood and sensibly interpreted." (*Vide* page 93.)

In India no field investigation on a large scale has been attempted to ascertain the number of persons who have completed the course of a class that gives literacy and yet have relapsed into a state of illiteracy

38. Bengal Census Report, 1921, pp. 288-289.

later on. Only the results of such an enquiry can provide reliable evidence on this point and not the casual observations of persons however high-placed they may be. If such an enquiry is undertaken under proper safeguards so as to eliminate under-rating or over-rating, the findings would be acceptable. A fair sample of a vague generalization is supplied by the following statement of an Inspector of Schools: "It has been ascertained on enquiries personally made and tests taken by me that children that leave school on completing their second standard (here 3rd year class) lapse into illiteracy in a course of three or four years. As regards children who drop off after completing standard III (here 4th year class) they can only spell some reading matter with difficulty after three or four years. If they have no occasion at all to read or write, these also lapse into illiteracy in the course of seven or eight years. Those children who have been in standard IV (here 5th year class) retain something of what they have learnt in schools. This shows that a boy may be said to be literate if he has studied upto standard IV (here 5th year class)." [39]

These observations, admirable as they are in giving mathematical precision to the enquiry, cannot be taken seriously. The enquirer, it appears, wanted to support the view held in official quarters that a boy did not become literate unless he *passed* the test of the 5th year class. He took up a few cases in a village in one of his rounds, applied to them certain tests and reached his conclusions. Unless one is assured that the officer did take representative sample and applied a uniform test to fair numbers, his conclusions have no value.

A comparison of the Census and the Educational statistics for the whole of British India shows that the completion of the 3rd year class gives literacy; while the Provincial statistics show that literacy is attained by the completion of the 3rd or at the most of the 4th year class. It has further been shown that when a pupil acquires literacy, he does not relapse into illiteracy. In some parts of India, however, opinions are being expressed that even the completion of the 4th year class does not give a pupil literacy or rather permanent literacy, and that for securing 'permanent literacy' it is necessary to make the pupil complete the 5th year class.

The following extract from the Report of the Travancore Educational Reforms Committee (1933) is of interest: "The schools and literacy: The extent to which the primary school system in Travancore has been contributing to the general literacy of the State can to some extent be decided by an examination of the number of children who leave class five and may be assumed to have acquired permanent literacy. Some years ago, the primary system in Travancore was based on three-

39. Bombay D.P.I.'s Report for 1917-22, pp. 66-67.

class primary schools. The three-class system, however, was found to be inadequate; and, the present primary system is based upon four-class schools. We are not willing, however, to accept the theory that all pupils who have read upto the fourth class can be regarded as permanent literates. There is abundant evidence, not merely in Travancore but all over India and elsewhere, that, for a pupil to reach the fourth class is no guarantee of permanent literacy unless that pupil either continues education or goes back to a literate home and a literate atmosphere." [40]

It will be remembered that in a previous place the bearing of the Census literacy figures on the Educational figures of Travancore has been discussed. The calculations made clearly show that the Census standard of literacy is permanently retained not only by *all* pupils who complete the 4th year class, but by almost all pupils who complete the 3rd year class. The calculations made there are, however, based upon the Bombay percentages of promoted pupils. It may be argued that the Bombay percentage may be too low for Travancore where education has advanced to an extent unknown in most other parts of India and hence the conclusions drawn may not really hold good for Travancore. It would, therefore, be better if the statistics are re-examined by the adoption of a percentage based upon Travancore figures. The latest Annual Report of the D.P.I. of Travancore for M.E. 1112 (i.e. A.D. 1937) gives figures [41] of pupils who are reported to be for more than one year in the first four classes of the primary schools, i.e. the number of 'repeaters' in each class. It is seen from these figures that the percentage of 'repeaters' for the 4th year class is 24. This means that in that year out of 100 pupils on the roll of that class, 76 were there for one year and the remaining 24 for more than one year. It is mentioned in the Report that this was achieved after strenuous efforts on the part of educational officers to reduce stagnation and to accelerate promotions. In the years 1922-31, therefore, the percentage of 'repeaters' must indeed be greater than 24. However, to be on firm ground, the same percentage, viz. 24, for the whole of the decade 1922-31 may be taken. The Report of the Travancore Education Reforms Committee gives the total number of pupils on the roll during the ten years 1922-31 in the 4th and 5th year classes as under:

4th Year Class	..	..	603,000
5th Year Class	..	..	272,000

Eliminating 24 per cent from the 4th year class pupils, the remaining 76 per cent will be pupils who have been in the 4th year class for one year only. Thus the number in the 4th year class excluding 'repeaters' comes to 4,58,000. These are the pupils who have received the benefit

40. Report of the Travancore Educational Reforms Committee (1933), pp. 76-77.
41. Annual Report of the D.P.I. of Travancore for M.E. 1112, p. 92.

of schooling in the 4th year class at least for a year. Supposing for the sake of argument that every one of them has become literate, then the schools' contribution to the general literacy of the State during the decade should be 4,58,000. The calculations from the Census figures show that the total output of literates in the State during the decade 1922-31 was 4,98,000; while the output accounted for by schools was 4,58,000. If the latter figure (4,58,000) were greater than the former (4,98,000), then it could have been said that there was scope for relapse into illiteracy. But it is not so. The calculations show that every single person who left school after completing the 4th year class from the year 1922 onwards has remained literate all along; not only that, but the difference of 40,000 (4,98,000 — 4,58,000) has to be accounted for by the assumption that either it is the product of extra-school agencies for producing literates or that not only all pupils who read for one year in the 4th year class have become permanently literate, but some from those who completed the 3rd year class, but have not had the opportunity to remain for one year in the 4th year class, have attained literacy and retained it for good.

The Travancore Committee's Report says that "the contribution to the general literacy of the State can to some extent be decided by an examination of the number of children who leave class five and may be assumed to have permanent literacy".[42]

The number on the rolls of the 5th year class during the decade 1922-31 was 2,72,000. The percentage of 'repeaters' in this class is not known. Assuming for the sake of argument that the percentage of 'repeaters' was 10, this gives about 2,45,000 new literates added during the decade by schools. The Census figures show an output of 4,98,000 new literates during the decade. If, therefore, one were to agree with the Educational Reforms Committee's view that the 5th year class supplies the quota of literates, not even half the number of the new literates shown by the Census figures would be covered by that number.

The view expressed in the Travancore Committee's Report is shared by others as well. In Mysore where for some years past a four-year primary course is current, similar advice is tendered to that State by the Committee on the Reorganisation of Education (1936). But the Mysore Committee are not content with raising the minimum course from four to five years, as is done by the Travancore Committee. They prescribe a six years' course.[43]

In repeatedly maintaining the view that once a pupil acquires literacy in school by completing a particular class that gives literacy, he does not relapse into illiteracy, reliance has been placed on a com-

---

42. Travancore Committee's Report, p. 76.
43. Report of the Committee on the Reorganisation of Education (1936), p. 22.

parative study of the Census and Educational statistics. The theory of relapse can, on the basis of these statistics, be reconciled only if one were to assume that there is an equal number of adult illiterates being made literates and vice versa.

When a large body of informed opinion stoutly aver that there is lapse into illiteracy on a considerable scale, although statistics may not support that view, it would be wise to enquire further into the matter.

The Hartog Committee have observed as follows: "The explanation of such relapse is simple. Retention of initial literacy acquired at early age of ten or eleven depends largely on environment, and the environment of the great majority of the Indian pupils who leave school at the primary stage is not conducive to such retention. The parents in the village home are usually illiterate, they are too poor to buy books, and attractive vernacular literature and periodicals suitable to children are not available, though there are vernacular books which might be read by children under religious impulse." [44]

The writer of the Baroda Census Report of 1921 goes still deeper into the problem and says: "With men of the agricultural classes—and especially in communities to whom learning is an irksome novelty—the results of schooling are soon apt to be effected in the more urgent work of earning their livelihood from the soil. The hard labour which tilling entails is a drain upon their mental energy; the routine of their daily tasks and the dull greyness of their unremitting toil do little to remind them of their childhood's reading." [45]

One more quotation may be permitted. The Bengal Census Report of 1921 paints a most vivid picture of what happens to the village boy when he leaves school in Bengal: "The village boy when he leaves school in Bengal and takes his share in the cultivation of his father's land has very little inducement to keep up his knowledge, even the most elementary knowledge of reading and writing. He reads no books or newspapers, and hardly ever even sees the written word. The family keeps no accounts, no shop-keeper's name is inscribed over the few shops to be found in rural areas, no articles for sale are marked with price, and there are no hoardings. Not even an advertisement catches his eye. The only written or printed papers which are to be found in a cultivator's house are the rent receipts given by his landlord, a document or two which has reference to his land written in legal phraseology in such a manner that it is the last thing a stumbling reader would wish to tackle, and perhaps some copies of evidence or a judgment in English in some case in which he has been an interested party. The newspapers published in the towns have a very small circulation in the towns themselves and none outside, partly for the reason that the

44. Hartog Report, p. 49. 45. Baroda Report, p. 269.

topics upon which they are exercised generally refer to party faction in which but a limited number of persons of the town itself are interested. They contain nothing of interest to the villager. In the circumstances it is inevitable that there must be much lapse from literacy."[46]

The environmental conditions mentioned in the above extracts are in consonance with reality and yet it is possible to maintain that they do not cause relapse into illiteracy. Not because they are not derogatory to the retention of literacy, but because at least until now the children from such homes hardly remain in schools to acquire literacy as judged by the Census standard. The great majority who leave in the middle for various causes are from such homes and hence the almost complete loss of what little they had learnt at school is apt to be called 'relapse into illiteracy'. There may be few real literates who may have such environment; and in their case they may be prone to lapse into illiteracy after a sufficient passage of time. But even in the case of such persons the slightest chance to revive literacy will remove the rust off the tools of knowledge acquired at school.

The crux of the problem of the relapse into illiteracy or the maintenance and improvement of literacy imperfectly acquired at school is then the after-school environment of the pupil. The schools can give at the most literacy, but they cannot be held responsible and condemned as inefficient if, when the pupil leaves school, he goes into an environment where he cannot maintain it and make use of it for his own benefit and for the benefit of his fellow-men. Literacy by itself is no blessing and unless the literates do make proper use of their literacy they are as good as illiterates. Do the advocates of a five-year or six-year course of minimum primary education believe that a pupil by staying for a year or two more in a school will acquire that kind of literacy which is above relapse under any environment whatsoever? And even supposing it is so, what is the use of that literacy if the after-school environment does not afford any facility for its profitable use? If a pupil after leaving school goes back to a literate home or a literate atmosphere, it does not matter even if his literacy is not as high as the Census standard of literacy. If he unfortunately goes into an absolutely illiterate home with no chance for revising his acquisition, it does not matter in the least whether he spends a year or two more at school. In order to enable one to create a suitable literate atmosphere for oneself, irrespective of one's own environment, a person has to continue uninterrupted his education for a considerable time beyond the minimum required for attaining literacy. The State would be well advised to spend the money required for maintaining pupils for one year more at school in making suitable literature available to those who have already become literates or even semi-literates. Money spent on

46. Bengal Report, p. 288.

the instruction of one boy in the school for one year in the higher class will keep sharp the literacy of at least ten through suitable agencies such as libraries or by the distribution of very cheap but suitable and useful reading material. The first kind of expenditure is of doubtful utility from the point of view of promotion of literacy; but the second kind will be effectively useful not to one only but to many.

VI. WASTAGE

In the preceding chapter it has been shown that in India a general impression prevails that a considerable number of pupils does not reach a class which gives them literacy. Further, some hold that even from amongst the pupils who are sufficiently advanced in instruction so as to attain literacy, a good many subsequently relapse into illiteracy. While the first view is borne out by facts, the second is not supported by a comparative study of the Census and Educational statistics. The causes of the failure of the Indian educational system to promote literacy on an adequate scale may be several. The idea, however, which dominates all discussions on mass education in India, whether official or otherwise, is that of 'wastage'. In fact, no discourse on mass education is regarded as complete unless it contains a statistical interpretation of the alleged wastage. The seriousness of this problem has been so much emphasized that it has led some to raise a cry of 'halt' and "the question is now asked whether an increase in the number of pupils is necessarily followed by a commensurate reduction in illiteracy".[47] The worst feature of this pessimism in the matter of expansion of mass education is, that an utter sense of despondency and despair seems to have obsessed those who are placed in authority to guide the country in its onward march towards universal education. Referring to the prospects of universal compulsion in India, it is observed: "The figures are astronomical and it will be long before universal compulsion can be introduced."[48] Now 'astronomical' figures—like the distance between the earth and the sun—are figures which excite imagination and are to be appreciated only in the realm of intellectual speculation. They will never come within the orbit of human experience. If such feelings are entertained at the threshold of our educational advance, there is little hope of further progress. The key-note of progress is a robust optimism. If other nations have achieved their goal, or are marching triumphantly towards its realization, there is no reason why India also should not be able to progress. Remedies for the prevention of wastage have been suggested by various writers almost from the day of its discovery a quarter of a century ago. Although every suggestion in this respect may not be acceptable, most of them are likely to be

47. *Progress of Education in India, 1927-32*, Vol. I, p. 139.
48. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 49.

effective and if determined efforts to combat the evil had been made wastage would not have become 'chronic' as it has been declared to be.

In order to have a clear idea of what wastage is, one cannot do better than quote from the Hartog Committee's Report: "By 'Wastage' . . . we mean the premature withdrawal of children from school at any stage before completion of the primary course. There is of course a diminution in numbers from class to class due to natural causes, such as death and illness, but the mortality figures show that such diminution must be small compared to the total diminution."[49]

It would be interesting to trace the discovery of this evil and give an account of the various methods adopted to give it a numerical expression. The first mention of 'wastage in schools' was made in the Progress of Education in India (Quinquennial Review) for 1907-12.[50] The term, however, was used there with reference to secondary and higher education. But the writer of the same Report refers to the problem of 'School-age and Literacy'[51] and for the first time draws attention to the short duration of school-life in India and also to the most important problem of the failure of education to produce literacy on an adequate scale. Shortly before the publication of this Report, the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale had brought in the then Imperial Legislative Council, a private Bill for the introduction of compulsory education. The Bill was officially opposed and thrown out as "premature and calculated to throw back the cause of elementary education".[52] In spite of the official opposition to this measure, the Government must have recognised the justice of Mr. Gokhale's demand and applied close attention to find out the defects of the educational system so as to devise ways and means to improve it. For it was felt that "a system that would not substantially increase the literacy in India in fifty years stood condemned as financially impracticable in a poor country".[53] Thus, it appears, was discovered the evil of wastage which in the Progress of Education in India, 1907-12, got a numerical expression. As is already mentioned, Sir Henry Sharp found that the 'lapse into illiteracy' in Indian Education came to 39 per cent. It is already shown that what he really tried to measure was not 'lapse into illiteracy' but 'wastage' as it is now generally understood.

In the next Progress of Education in India, 1912-17, the word 'wastage' was again used in reference to secondary education, but was not specifically used in reference to primary education. However, the Report discusses the "early abandonment of studies" in primary schools and aptly describes that problem as "the greatest crux in the whole

49. p. 47. 50. Vol. I, p. 102.
51. ibid., p. 139.
52. *Progress of Education in India*, 1907-12, Vol. I, p. 132.
53. *The Education of India*—Mayhew, p. 233.

question of elementary education in India".[54] It also mentions the concomitant evil of 'stagnation'. The significant passage is worth quoting: "The shortness of time passed at school by the average pupil who enters a primary institution undoubtedly accounts for the fact that the figures of literacy are less than what would be justified by the figures of school attendance. But this is not the only reason. Not only is the duration of school life short, but it is too often marked by stagnation. The central and most unsatisfactory feature of primary education is the fact that the great majority of the children are in the lower primary classes and nearly half in the most rudimentary stage."[55] Both the evils—wastage and stagnation—were by now fully recognised although the term 'wastage' was not yet used in reference to the evil.

The writer of the next Progress of Education in India, 1917-22, dropped altogether the reference to 'wastage in schools' with regard to secondary schools and after discussing the various evils of primary education in the strain of his predecessor, remarked: "the only effective method of checking irregular attendance and wastage was compulsory education which is no longer a wholly impossible ideal".[56] Here there is a clear reference to what is called 'wastage'.

The credit of further elucidating this problem by suggesting a method for measuring wastage, goes to Mr. R. Littlehailes, the writer of Progress of Education in India, 1922-27. For the first time in the Quinquennial Reports for Indian Education, he treated the whole question of failure of primary education in India in relation to its various aspects such as "duration of school life, illiteracy, wastage and stagnation".[57] In the Annual Report of Education in India for 1923-24, he laid down a simple method for measuring wastage.[58] The measure according to him "is obtained by comparing the number of pupils reading in any standard, say, the 3rd standard, with the number of pupils who read in the immediately junior standard in the previous year". On the basis of these calculations he remarks, "the total wastage of educational efforts and its concurrent dissipation of educational funds in the primary classes is about fifty per cent of the total energy put forth".[59] This was based, it appears, on the fact that out of about 61 lakhs of pupils reading in the first four classes in 1922-23, about 28 lakhs left school in the middle in 1923-24 before reaching the 4th year class. In the calculations made in the Report for 1923-24, Mr. Littlehailes took up for comparison the figures of two consecutive years only. But later on, in his Progress of Education in India, 1922-27,[60] he took five consecutive years and showed elimination or wastage from class to class. The Hartog Committee also in their Report[61]

54. Vol. I, p. 110.
55. ibid., p. 122.
56. Vol. I, p. 117.
57. Vol. I, p. 123.
58. Report, pp. 30-31.
59. ibid., p. 31.
60. Vol. I, pp. 126-127.
61. Report, pp. 46-47.

adopted the method suggested by Mr. Littlehailes in the Progress of Education and since that time it has become so popular that there is hardly an Educational Report which does not supply figures of pupils for four or five consecutive years and calculate wastage in this manner. Education in India in 1934-35 contains the following on this question: "In the whole of India (for boys) 74 per cent of those who attend primary schools fail to reach class IV where they may be said to attain permanent literacy."[62] For girls it is said "out of every hundred girls who enter a girls' school in the lowest class, only 13 per cent reach class IV in which permanent literacy may be expected. That is, 87 per cent are wasting their time and the tax-payer's money".[63] Calculated for both boys and girls together, the percentage of wastage comes to 77.

It may be stated here that in arriving at a measurement of 'wastage' the methods have not been uniform. The first figure (39) was arrived at by a comparative study of the Census and the Educational statistics. The second figure (50) was obtained by finding out the number of pupils that were eliminated from class to class by comparing figures of pupils on roll for two consecutive years; while the third figure (77) was arrived at by taking figures for a period of four years (1931-32 to 1934-35) and from class to class.

Each of these three methods has its merits and demerits. In the first method calculations are made by comparing two sets of statistics independently recorded without any assumption as regards the class that gives literacy. In the second and third methods, the assumption is made that the 4th year class gives literacy. The best method for ascertaining wastage would be to trace the number of pupils who leave school before reaching the class which is supposed to give them literacy. But in the absence of such detailed statistical data, one has to rely upon rough and ready methods based upon the data that are available in official reports.

Two methods for ascertaining the measure of wastage in primary schools in India may here be considered in detail. Wastage, it may be repeated, represents the percentage of pupils who fail to acquire literacy after joining a primary school.

The first method is based on a comparison of Census figures of literacy and statistics given in Educational Reports (somewhat on the lines of the method used by Sir Henry Sharp).

In 1922 there were in schools in British India (excluding Burma) approximately 45.4 lakhs of pupils of ages 5-10.[64] From 1922 to 1931, 9 per cent of them died leaving alive, in 1931, 41.3 lakhs of persons of ages 14-19. The Census of 1931 showed that in that year there were in

62. p. 42. 63. p. 61.
64. Extracted from tables on pp. 64-65 and p. 80 of Vol. II of *Progress of Education in India*, 1917-22.

British India (excluding Burma) 24.4 lakhs of literates of ages 15-20. Disregarding the slight difference in age between the persons representing the numbers 41.3 and 24.4 lakhs, it is found that out of 41.3 lakhs persons living in 1931 who were in schools nine years ago, 24.4 lakhs were recorded as literates. The wastage thus comes to 41 per cent.

Figures of pupils of 5-10 in 1921 are available for Bombay and hence the slight difference of age mentioned above does not exist in the case of Bombay figures. Calculating on the above lines it is found that the wastage in Bombay comes to 39 per cent.

The second method which can give us an approximate idea about wastage is based upon the percentage of pupils in each class to the total in any one year. The following were the figures for British India (including Burma) for 1934-35:

	No. on Roll (000)	Percentage
Class I	5241	51
Class II	2230	21
Class III	1675	16
Class IV	1206	12
	10,352	100

This shows that 12 pupils are reading in the 4th class out of 100 pupils in the first four classes. Assuming for the sake of argument that a pupil becomes literate only by reading in the 4th year class in an unwasteful system of education in which there is no retardation, there ought to be 25 pupils in each of the four classes. This means that if there were 25 pupils in the 4th year class instead of 12, the system would be perfect. Instead of 25 pupils there are 12 in the 4th year class. Thus the system is 48 per cent sound and 52 per cent wasteful. In the above calculations it has been assumed that the 4th year class gives literacy. In a previous chapter an attempt has been made to prove that the statistics of the whole of British India show that the completion of the 3rd year class gives literacy. On this assumption the following is the percentage of pupils in each of these classes:

	No. on Roll (000)	Percentage
Class I	5241	57
Class II	2230	24
Class III	1675	19
	9146	100

In an unwasteful system of education there ought to have been 33.3 per cent children in the 3rd year class, but the figure is 19. The wastage, therefore, here comes to about 43 per cent. In basing the calculations on the figures of any one year, the possibility of any complications that may creep in on account of 'repeaters' is eliminated. So also the diminution of numbers from class to class due to natural causes is excluded.

In the above calculations the present system of Indian education has been compared to an ideal one; but no system can attain the ideal. A reasonable elimination of numbers from class to class is natural owing to reasons such as death, sickness, mental incapacity, etc. If 90 per cent of the pupils in each class go up to the next class, it can safely be said that the system is a sound one. If the present system is compared with a system where 90 per cent promotions are secured, the wastage in a four-class system would be 43 per cent and in a three-class system 37 per cent.

The first method gives wastage at 41 per cent, while the second places it at 43 per cent. In any case wastage in Indian primary schools from the point of view of acquisition of the Census standard of literacy need not be taken as being above 50 per cent. It is somewhere nearer 40 than 50. And yet when the question of wastage is discussed in official reports, its percentage is often put down at a figure which is about 80. Bad as the system is, it is submitted that it is not as bad as it is made out to be. The situation is not hopeless. It is amenable to improvement.

Although there may be difference of opinion as regards a quantitative measurement of wastage in the primary schools in India, there is no doubt that the wastage exists on a considerable scale. And unless it is either minimised or eliminated, the output of literates through the agency of primary schools will always remain smaller than what it ought to be.

VII. STAGNATION

The problem of 'wastage' is most intimately connected with what is called 'stagnation' which means "the retention in a lower class of a child for a period of more than one year".[65] Of all the causes that lead to wastage the most potent is the inability of a pupil to secure promotion to a higher class after attending the class for one year. What is the numerical measure of this stagnation? The following table contains the relevant information for the Bombay Presidency for the ten years 1922 to 1931. Similar figures for other Provinces are not available.

---

65. Hartog Committee Report, p. 47.

Bombay Presidency (including Sind) 1922 to 1931

Class	Total No. of pupils on roll (000)	Total No. of pupils promoted (000)	Percentage
1st year ..	3349	1481	44
2nd year ..	1716	1017	59
3rd year ..	1460	831	57
4th year ..	1148	666	58
Total	7673	3995	52

It will be seen from the above table that during the ten years 1922 to 1931, the schools in the Province detained about half the pupils.

Similar figures for the Etawah District in the U.P. are available for the year 1928: [66]

Class	Total on roll	Passed	Percentage
1st year ..	9163	3057	33
2nd year ..	3824	2563	67
3rd year ..	2598	2142	82
4th year ..	1901	1524	80
Total	17486	9286	53

The Baroda State Annual Educational Reports contain similar figures; the percentages for 1923-24 are given below:

Class	Roll	Passes
I ..	100	31
II ..	100	47
III ..	100	44
IV ..	100	50
Average	100	40

The position regarding promotions in schools in some other countries may now be considered.

66. *An Educational Survey of a District*—Chaturvedi, p. 176.

The Government of the Philippine Islands appointed a Commission of distinguished educationists to survey the system of education prevailing in the Islands. The Commission issued their Survey of the Educational System of the Philippine Islands in 1925. They found the following percentages of promotions in the primary schools of the Islands:

Grade (Class)	Percentage of Promotions[67]
I ..	80
II ..	70
III ..	53
IV ..	50
	(Average for 4 classes, 67)

The Commission were so much struck by these figures that they recorded their strong disapproval of the whole system which allowed such a state of things to exist in the schools. They say: "The story of progress of pupils through the elementary grades is the story of 'failure', the story of non-promotions. *Schools are established in order that children may be taught, not that they may be failed.* The community and the nation build buildings, hire teachers and administrators, and finance equipment, libraries, and laboratories in order that a generation of young people may be educated and prepared for useful living."[68]

"One of the most effective single measures of administrative efficiency of a school system is the percentage of failure. Schools are created for the purposes of teaching children. Daily records of achievement, examinations, and marking systems, schemes for classifying and promoting children are merely administrative devices for economical handling of pupils in large masses. They have become necessary appurtenances of a system of schools because modern education is 'mass education'; the spread of democracy over the world has made impossible the individual instructions of pupils."[69]

"Can this administrative situation be condoned? It is the unqualified judgment of the Commission that it cannot. That an adequate defence can be found for any school system that 'fails' more than 10 per cent of its pupils is extremely doubtful."[70]

"Before leaving this question we should face squarely the following issue: Should there be any 'failures' at all in a school system—failures in the sense that children must repeat the work of a grade or a considerable part of it? The answer of the Commission is 'No'. There

67. Survey, p. 214.
68. ibid.
69. ibid., p. 215.
70. ibid., p. 216.

is no justification for causing pupils to do over again the work of a grade. If hundreds of thousands of pupils cannot 'pass' the course of study set up by the Central Bureau, a fair reply of pupils and communities to the present attitude is 'change the course of study'. That courses of instruction are made to fit children and not the reverse is a truism of school organisation. Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls are 'failing' annually. Hundreds of thousands are marking time by passing through the mechanical routine of a memoriter education. There is an enormous wastage of school funds; there is a parallel wastage of human energy."[71]

"... as measured by practices in many other countries, particularly in the case of promotions, much remains to be done. The extraordinary rate of failures indicates serious maladjustment within the system and constitutes a grievous waste of public funds and the energies of children."[72]

Lastly a very pertinent remark may be quoted: "Children should not be allowed to repeat school grades indefinitely. Repetition does them little good; it does others much harm. *Children are frequently promoted when not prepared.*"[73]

The last sentence in the above quotation deserves to be seriously considered as food for thought by those who attach undue importance to examinations and consequent promotions in a system of mass education.

Somewhat extensive quotations have been given above from the Survey because they contain weighty words of a Commission of distinguished American educationists headed by Dr. Paul Monroe and they should convey to Indian teachers and administrators a message which if taken to heart will undoubtedly transform the whole field of mass education.

'Failing pupils' seems to have been a characteristic tendency of the educational administration of this country practically from its very inception. For instance, when the first Matriculation examination was held in Bombay, the then D.P.I., Mr. Howard, was an examiner for English. He proudly declared that he had failed every candidate who had committed *three* palpable mistakes of spelling or grammar in the English paper.[74] With the passage of time, failing pupils has now grown into a veritable tradition. In old days the view was often expressed that every pupil who entered the 1st year class was a potential matriculate, if not a graduate, and at every rung of the ladder he must be very firmly set up before he is allowed to go up. Whatever may be

---

71. ibid., p. 218.
72. ibid., pp. 14-16.
73. ibid., p. 33 (author's italics).
74. Report of D.P.I., Bombay, 1859-60, p. 39.

the value of this view, it did not matter much so long as the schools catered mostly for the 'classes'. Now that the 'masses' are coming to schools the outlook must be entirely changed. In fact it is the first principle of mass education that every pupil who enters the school should be enabled to go from class to class in the scheduled time. Every part of the administrative machinery must be made to serve this most fundamental principle.

But this is no easy task in India. A new mentality has to be created. The greatest obstacle will be the conservatism of teachers. They think in terms of 'efficiency', as they understand it. They remember their own days and how their own teachers handled the problem of promotions. This they do and will do, not because they are hard-hearted, but because they have never been trained to think about the larger issues of mass education and mass literacy. It is likely that some members of the supervising staff will ridicule the idea of easy promotions. All these forces must be counted and effective measures will have to be taken to counteract any tendencies to adhere to the old order of things in the matter of promotions, especially in the primary stage where the children of the masses form the great bulk. It is certain that this reform in mass education is imperative and no time must be lost in brining it about, if the masses are to be made literate quickly and cheaply through the agency of schools. Compulsory education alone without a system of liberal promotions will give little help to the solution of the problem of mass education.

The question naturally arises whether unprepared pupils are to be promoted to higher classes. The answer to this is already supplied by the Philippines Commission when they say: "Children are frequently promoted when not prepared."[75] In a land which is examination-ridden and which is steeped in the traditions of 'failing pupils', it is unwise, of course, to preach that pupils should be promoted even though unprepared. Even so, however, in order to achieve the aim of mass literacy, a way out of this impasse has to be found. This could be done as shown below by adapting the needs of the examination to the conditions of schooling obtaining in each school.

Suppose there is a one-teacher school where the teacher has to teach, say, four or five classes simultaneously. If the State finds it necessary to keep such a school, then it is its duty so to adjust the curriculum, the time-table and the methods of teaching, that an average pupil with average attendance and application, would be promoted to a higher class. It is indeed unwise to detain him in the same class because he was not able to finish a particular course of instruction which was originally chalked out for a class taught by one teacher in charge

75. Report, p. 33.

of that class only. Further, if the pupils come from homes where they cannot get adequate facilities for regular attendance, they must not be made to suffer by detention because of the handicap imposed on them by unavoidable economic conditions. Primarily the whole system of schooling in a locality must be adjusted to the needs of each locality, small or big, care being taken that the pupils do not suffer by detention because the conditions of schooling were such as not to enable an average boy to finish the course prescribed for one year. If he is not able to finish the prescribed course, it should be changed into an easier one, and if still he is not able to finish it, it should be made easier still.

Our traditions are, however, different. The prescribed curricula are treated as sacrosanct. In this connection the following observations of the Philippines Commission are very apposite: "The curriculum has the appearance of being made for the teachers and supervisors and not by them. This feeling finds corroboration in their practice in literally following in details and in their hesitancy to attempt any modifications of its prescriptions. The curriculum seems to be something handed down from above, complete and unchangeable until authoritatively revised." They further add: "We were led to feel at times that any attempt to do anything progressive was more often punished than rewarded." [76]

The statistics of some of the countries which are now at a high stage of educational advancement show that in spite of defects in schooling, even in the early stages of their evolution, they maintained a high percentage of promotions. Classes were large and teachers mostly untrained and yet these factors did not affect the progress of the pupils from class to class.

Promotions on a low scale lead to several undesirable results, especially in a country like India where the economic conditions of the masses are unsatisfactory. Owing to poverty they are not inclined to spare their children for schooling, and if they do so, in most cases, they find that their children stagnate in the same class for two or even more years. They are, therefore, disgusted with the situation, and withdrawal of the children from schools quickly follows. To the children themselves there is nothing more disheartening than being made to repeat the same lessons for a year or two. They lose interest in schooling and gradually drift away from it.

In this connection, the Philippines Commission say: "For another year 32 per cent of the entire pupil body were required to work the same arithmetical problems, to read the same books, to spell the same words, . . . as in the preceding years. That the educational value

76. Report, p. 229.

accruing from this distaste of scholastic work is practically nil can be safely predicted." [77]

A promoted child not only goes to school cheerfully, but his parents also learn to have faith in the school and, in nine cases out of ten, he will make up any deficiency that might have remained in his attainments. A detained child, on the other hand, is a potential enemy of the school, in addition to being a source of disappointment to his parents.

Mr. S. N. Chaturvedi, in his Educational Survey of a District, writes: "This huge number of failures is an almost dead loss to the school, for very few of those who have tasted failure care to return. . . . Thus failure does not only mean loss of a year, but in a larger number of cases, complete stoppage of education. The disappointment caused to younger children by failure is particularly keen and the discouragement that the parent feels at finding his child detained in the class after a full year's sacrifice of work in fields seals the fate of further education of a child who has failed. . . .

"The remedy lies in improved teaching and liberal promotions at least in the lowest classes."[78]

Sir George Anderson, in his 'Progress of Education in India, 1927-32', writes: "Full use should therefore be made of the early years of schooling and promotion should be as rapid as possible: otherwise, valuable time and money will be lost and there will be no appreciable reduction of illiteracy." [79] These are wise words of an eminent educational administrator who has done great service to Indian education.

To those who plead for liberal promotions a question is often asked —what about the pupils who go up to the secondary schools for their further education? Unless the pupils are thoroughly grounded in all the staple subjects of the primary course, they will not be fit for the lowest class of the secondary school. Granting that it is so, will it not be advisable to adjust the requirements of the lower classes of secondary schools so that any deficiency in the primary stage owing to liberal promotions may be made up in the secondary stage? After all, the whole school system—from primary to secondary—is a continuous process and there is no need of putting each in a separate compartment. Let the contents of education be so graduated that from the lowest class of the primary stage to the highest class of the secondary stage there is a continually richer curricula. It does not matter if a child learns a few things less in the lower primary stage and makes them up if and when he goes to higher and higher classes.

---

77. Report, pp. 215-216. 78. pp. 177-178. 79. Vol. I, p. 143.

The anomalies existing in the Indian educational system are indeed beyond comprehension. The full course from the lowest primary class to the highest secondary class (Matriculation) covers a period of 12 years in Bombay; while in other Provinces it is one either of 10 or of 11 years. It cannot be said that the Bombay Matriculate is superior to the Madras Matriculate, or that a Bengal Matriculate is superior to the one from the Punjab. In the eyes of the world they are all equal. Why then is an extra sacrifice of time and money demanded from the Bombay pupil? It is difficult to offer a satisfactory explanation for this difference. The above illustration shows that the contents of the curricula are easily adjusted when the authorities concerned are inclined to do so. If, therefore, to secure liberal promotions, it is found necessary to lower the contents of the course of a class or classes, it would not be difficult at all to make suitable adjustments later on, so that the so-called 'efficiency' may not suffer in the long run.

VIII. THE FIRST YEAR CLASS

The peculiarity of the Indian system of primary education is that in addition to a high percentage of failures and consequent detentions in all classes in general, the percentage of promotions is the most discouraging in the lowest or the 1st year class. This class is called 'Infants' in Bombay and the U.P. It appears that Bengal has decided to give up the nomenclature.[80] The following figures give some idea of this high percentage of non-promotions:

Province or State	Year	Percentage of failures in the 1st Year Class
Bombay	1927	54
Bombay	1937	50
Baroda	1924	69
U.P. (Etawah Dt.)	1928	66

These figures may be compared with those of the following two foreign countries:

Country	Year	Percentage of failures in the 1st Year Class
The Philippine Islands	1924	20
The Philippine Islands	1934	23
The Dutch East Indies	1935	19

80. School Education in Bengal, 1937 (G.R. 1937 Edn.).

It will be seen that the percentage of failures in India is nearly three times that of the two foreign countries.

The root cause of the failure of Indian education to promote literacy appears to be the unsatisfactory condition from all points of view of the 1st year class. If the situation at present prevailing in this class could be improved, many other evils would automatically be eradicated and the efforts at the promotion of literacy of the masses through primary schools will not show such disappointing results. This is entirely borne out by the example of the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies where the failures in the 1st year class are about 20 per cent; while in India, the percentage is about 60. The fact that in India failures in the 1st year class are 60 per cent makes a world of difference in the ultimate efficiency of the schools to produce literates.

Mr. Kini observes as follows after careful statistical enquiry: "... once the pupils are promoted from the first class to the second class they tend to continue their studies till a later stage. The enormous proportion of elimination at the very threshold of our educational system is a very regrettable feature." [81]

The harm caused to the nation through this huge percentage of failures of the 1st year class pupils is incalculable. Some idea of it can be had from the consideration of two aspects of the problem: (1) The proportion of pupils in the 1st year class to the total number of pupils in the first four classes is very large, and hence anything that affects the working of the 1st year class seriously affects the whole system. (2) The largest number of pupils who leave school permanently before attaining literacy is from the 1st year class. Not only that, but their attainments are so meagre that practically the money and efforts spent over them may be said to be altogether wasted. As Mr. Chaturvedi has observel: "Out of 100 boys admitted to the infants class, only 35.7 reach Class II. The remaining two-thirds relapse into the completest possible illiteracy and no efforts are made to check this. This is the most vital educational problem before the public and the educational authorities. All other high sounding schemes can take care of themselves later on." [82] The same writer calculates that out of 9,163 pupils in the 1st year class, 3,664 failed and out of them only 873 appeared for the same examination in the next year. This means that 2,791 out of 3,664 who failed left school, giving a percentage of 76.[83]

The neglect of the infants or the 1st year class by the teacher has been noted as one of the evils of the Indian system of education since long. Sir Henry Sharp, in his 'Progress of Education in India', 1912-17,

81. Report of the Educational Survey in Mysore (1927-28), Vol. I, p. 215.
82. *An Educational Survey of a District*, p. 181.
83. ibid., p. 176.

observes: "But the number and variety of subjects taken by the upper primary classes, the greater interest these subjects have for the teachers and the importance attached by inspecting officers to the attainment of senior pupils lead the teacher to devote a large proportion of his time to the higher classes. More than this, were the infants class taken for even an hour a day some progress might result." [84]

The Hartog Committee say: "One cause for the great wastage and stagnation in the lower classes of primary schools where there is more than one teacher is the habit of placing the lowest class in charge of the least qualified teacher. This practice has naturally resulted in the worst teaching being concentrated in the class where the most careful handling is required. The lowest class in India presents peculiar difficulties, since boys and girls are admitted at present at all ages and at all times of the year, and in consequence there is additional need for special care. In Indian primary schools, as they are at present, the maxim of 'the best teacher for the youngest children' is specially applicable." [85]

In a one-teacher or single-teacher school the situation is still worse. Mr. Chaturvedi writes of a single-teacher school: ". . . the infants class, especially, the backbone as well as the Gordian Knot of the Vernacular Education, suffers to an unbelievable degree . . . the single teacher has scarcely any time for the infants class which is left to grow like wild weeds in a garden." [86]

Quotations showing the neglect of the 1st year class not only in a single-teacher school, but even in a school with more than one teacher, can be multiplied. The question is how to improve the situation. Those who have the English system of education before their eyes naturally suggest the employment of women—trained specially for this kind of work—as the proper remedy. Mr. Richey, in his 'Progress of Education in India', 1922-27, observes: "One of the chief defects of the elementary teacher in India is his sex. Universal experience has shown that the best teacher for young children is a woman. It is rare that a man shows any real aptitude for teaching an infants class. No amount of normal school training will make up for this natural deficiency. But if the trained teacher has little success with beginners what sympathetic understanding or expository skill can be expected of the junior untrained assistant or senior pupil to whom the infants class is often entrusted?" [87]

The latest observation on this need of specially trained women teachers for infants is made by the D.P.I. of Bombay who has been pressing this point in a very convincing manner. In his quinquennial report for 1932-37 he says: "Most of the harm is done in the first year

---

84. Vol. I, p. 122.
85. Report, p. 80.
86. *An Educational Survey of a District*, pp. 32-33.
87. Vol. I, p. 116.

of a child's school life. At present there are hardly any teachers in this Province who have any knowledge or have had any training in the handling of small children. The teaching of small children is an art in itself and requires considerably more skill than the teaching of older children, and it will be found that in Europe and America classes composed of smaller children are usually put in the hands of women teachers. Experience will, therefore, point out to the need of more women teachers with a good educational background behind them who have been trained specifically for infant work." [88]

The gist of the above remarks is that in order to improve the teaching of infants, it is necessary to employ specially trained teachers and particularly women. The remedy suggested is excellent. But is it practicable? The practicability of the remedy must be examined from two points of view, financial and social. In Bombay there are about 35,000 teachers in primary schools, and at least one out of three must be in charge of infants. To train 12,000 teachers in special methods of 'infant work' is a task beyond the resources of Bombay which has not got today even 50 per cent ordinary trained teachers. The remedy, therefore, will not come within the realm of the practicable in the near future. The suggestion that these infants' teachers should be 'trained women', and trained for that particular work, is not only impracticable but also impossible. Even today in Bombay many girls' schools and classes are in the hands of male teachers. Besides, the conditions of living in villages which would have the bulk of the infants in schools are quite unfavourable to women teachers being posted to such schools. Under these handicaps the remedy of training women teachers 'with a good educational background' specially for infant work seems to be of no practical value.

While fully appreciating the value of training for teachers in general, it is difficult to subscribe to the view that most of the defects of Indian education are to be laid at the door of want of sufficient number of trained teachers. "It is not safe to assume that a teacher without technical preparation will necessarily be a poor teacher; nor that every person with the best training yet devised will be an effective teacher." [89] Many nations have gone ahead with mass education and many more are doing so today in spite of the paucity of trained teachers. The supply of an adequate number of trained teachers is mainly a question of finance. It is, however, worth noting that England had not even 50 per cent trained teachers in her schools during the most important years of expansion of mass education, 1870-1900.[90]

---

88. Vol. I, p. 110. 89. *Philippines Educational Survey*, p. 405.
90. *Mass Education in India*—Parulekar, p. 33.

Today nearly 80 per cent of the teachers in the elementary schools in England are women. The English system of employing women teachers in preference to men has grown not only on educational but also on financial grounds, a female teacher's remuneration being 80 per cent of that of a male.[91]

Without being unmindful of the good that will accrue if the 1st year class pupils are put under the charge of the best available teachers, one cannot forget that in Indian schools only half the teachers are 'trained'.[92] In the year 1932 there were in British India roughly two lakh primary schools of which half were single-teacher schools; while the total number of teachers was $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, each multi-teacher school thus having 2.5 teachers teaching 3 to 5 classes. Assuming that the distribution of the trained and untrained teachers is even in all types of schools, on an average there will be 1.25 trained teachers per multi-teacher school. It will thus be seen that there is little scope for carrying out the suggestion that the best trained teacher be given to the lowest class. In cities and towns where there are schools, each with many teachers, it is possible to divert a good trained teacher to the lowest class. But taking India as a whole, the suggestion of giving trained teachers to the lowest classes cannot be enforced on a large scale until the percentage of trained teachers is greatly increased. This again leads to financial difficulties of an almost insuperable character. If, therefore, the instruction of the lowest class is to be improved within the present financial resources, recourse will have to be had to ways and means, such as restricting the admission to the lowest classes to a specific period of the year only, raising of the age of admission, etc. These reforms, if enforced, are bound to effect remarkable improvement in the teaching of the lowest class. Other suggested remedies, however attractive and sound, will not help because of financial and other considerations. Whoever may be the teacher of the 1st year class, it is essential that he should devote at least a couple of hours' undivided attention a day to that class.[93] This class is often looked upon as a gathering place for youngsters to accustom them to the school and not for actual instruction. Mr. Mason Olcott very aptly says in reference to the infants' class: "Often they are taught nothing at all except to sit motionless and speechless, and thus 'get used to school'! Several Provinces appropriately call the class, where they acquire such habits of dull apathy, the infant (that is, non-speaking) class. Nothing is expected of them either by the teacher or the parents."[94]

This is indeed a very sad state of things. The supervising officer must make it clear to the teacher that the merit of his work will much

91. *Mass Education in India*—Parulekar, p. 24
92. *Progress of Education in India*, 1927-32, Vol. I, p. 151.
93. Report, D.P.I., Bombay, Vol. I, 1917-22, p. 67.
94. *Better Village Schools*, p. 119.

depend upon the results of the 1st year class. The final result of the work will have to be judged by the number of pupils promoted. If a child who attends for a prescribed minimum number of days fails to be promoted, the reasons must be very carefully scrutinized. In fact the whole machinery of inspection and teaching must be so adjusted that all eyes must be on the 1st year class. Hitherto it was the practice to concentrate attention on the upper classes, but now the 1st year class must claim it. If these simple measures which require no additional expenditure are carried out, there is no doubt that a great change for the better will come over the educational system.

The question of the curriculum of the 1st year class has not been considered here. Important as it is, it does not matter what the curriculum is, so long as the folly is not committed of prescribing a curriculum which cannot be reasonably completed by the teacher and the class of a particular school within the time allotted and under conditions of schooling obtaining in that school.

There is hardly a country in the world which has not recognised the imperative necessity of restricting school admissions to the 1st year class to certain times in a year. In fact, mass education will not be successful unless the 1st year class children are admitted only once a year. Admissions made twice a year are bad enough, but more frequent ones are simply disastrous. The system of primary education introduced under the British Administration has, from its inception, been defective in this respect. It was in the 'Progress of Education in India', 1912-17, that reference to this evil was made for the first time. The Report says: "But the irregularity of making admissions brings it about that the class (first year class) contains children at every different stages of attainments."[95] The Progress for 1917-22 prominently makes mention of this defect: "There is no fixed date of admission. Pupils come in month by month according to caprice or the influence of their horoscopes. The lowest class, a class in which numbers are high, is a collection of little groups each at a different stage of advancement."[96] The Hartog Committee Report says: "The lowest class in India presents peculiar difficulties; since boys and girls are admitted at present at all ages and at all times of the year, and in consequence, there is additional need for special care."[97] The Committee also refer to the attempts made by Mr. H. Dippie to introduce "the salutary innovation of confining school admission to a single month of the year". Mr. Dippie seems to be the first officer in India who tried to combat this great evil in actual practice. Others saw it before him, but it appears that they simply stated the evil and left it for others to apply remedies. Mr. Dippie rightly called the 1st year class "a stagnant pool". It is not known how far Mr. Dippie succeeded in getting better results. The

---

95. Vol. I, p. 122. 96. Vol. I, p. 117. 97. p. 80.

question is now coming into prominence and the official attempts to restrict admissions to a specific period of the year are steadily gaining fruit.

It is indeed a good sign that in some of the recent reports on Educational Reconstruction, the importance of restriction of admissions is duly emphasized. Mr. R. S. Weir, in his Report on Primary Education in U.P., says: "Yet another cause of inefficiency is the admission of pupils in the lower form twice yearly. The system which was an advance on the previous system (when no restriction was observed) is still too liberal. Inevitably, it creates confusion. I recommend that admission be limited to the months of July and August each year and that subsequent admissions, except in the case of transfers, be rigorously banned. Without such a safeguard, the teacher never can know where he is with his class. With it, he is assured of a compact body which he may reasonably teach as a whole." [98]

The Report of the Education Reorganization Committee of Burma (1936) makes a distinct recommendation in this matter: "Enrolment should be limited rigidly to a period of 60 days from the date of the official opening of the school year . . . subject to the proviso that where conditions permit a Local Education Authority may fix a period of less than 60 days for enrolment." [99]

The Vocational Training Committee of Bombay in their recent (1938) Report recommend: "We are of opinion that fresh admissions to the lowest class, i.e. to Standard I (at present classed infants), should ordinarily be made within two months from the date of the beginning of the school year." [100]

Although this evil was recognised as far back as in 1912, and in spite of the consensus of opinion for its removal by various Educational Committees, Departments of Education do not appear to have made any serious efforts to eradicate it, because it is only in recent years that rules have been framed in some Provinces restricting admissions to once a year only. Even the Rules under the various Compulsory Education Acts have not taken into account this great evil. That so obvious and eminently desirable a reform should take so long in being implemented merely shows how apathetic has been the Educational Administration in this country.

IX. AGE OF ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS

In a system of mass education, it is very necessary to admit such children only as have attained a particular age. A Compulsory Education Act has to provide for the lower and upper age limits of compulsion. From the year 1918 onwards all the Indian Provinces

98. p. 18. 99. p. 177. 100. p. 14.

have passed Compulsory Education Acts. The lower age limit for compulsion is 6, although the Punjab Act allows the option of making it 7, with the previous sanction of Government. The upper age limit is 11 in all cases.

But the fixing of an age limit for compulsion between 6 and 11 does not prevent children below and above those ages from attending schools. It only means that a child cannot be legally forced to join a school before he is 6 and he cannot be legally allowed to leave school before he is 11, unless, of course, he has completed the minimum standard of education which gives him exemption. Children are allowed to join schools today even when they are below 5.

The following table gives the percentage of pupils in the 1st year class according to age in British India:

Age	Percentages				
	1912	1917	1922	1927	1932
Below 5	5	5	4	4	3
5 - 6	21	20	17	17	22
6 - 7	24	24	24	25	27
Above 7	50	51	55	54	48

From the above table it is seen that although there is marked improvement in the position so far as children under 5 are concerned, there is no such change in the next age-group, viz. between 5 and 6. One out of every four children in the 1st year class is below 6, which is the minimum age fixed for admission to school under the Compulsory Education Acts.

The question may be raised as to why admission to school below a certain age-limit should be restricted. Is it not harsh to say 'no' to a child, if he comes to school by himself when he is, say, 4 years old? The parents want him to go to school. Why should he not be allowed? Some even assert that a rate-payer has a right to get his child admitted to school irrespective of his age.

One comprehensive answer can be given to these questions: "Modern education is 'mass education'. The spread of democracy over the world has made impossible the individual instructions of pupils."[101] There was a time when education was meant only for those who sought it. Now it is to be given to all whether they want it or not. Hence came the idea of compulsion. In the old order of things

101. *Philippines Educational Survey*, p. 215.

the numbers to be educated were small. Moreover, tuition fees defrayed a substantial share of the expenditure. Again, most schools were then private schools and as the people sent their children of their own free will, they willingly bore a share of the expenditure. In the new order of things, on the other hand, children are actually compelled to go to school. The numbers are swelling and in India they have still to swell four times. Compulsion has necessitated the abolition of fees, because it is believed that it is not fair that you should compel a parent to send his child to school and at the same time ask him to pay for the schooling. The State share of expenditure is rapidly increasing. The sheer weight of numbers is forcing upon the State the necessity of maintaining larger classes. The teacher has no time to look after the wants of each child separately and individually. He has to teach the class as a whole often consisting of 40 to 50 children and sometimes an equal number spread over four or five classes. Under these conditions of schooling, which the State is forced to adopt owing to limitations of its finance, it is imperative that the age of a child admitted to the 1st year class should be such as would enable him to profit by the kind of instruction imparted in the schools maintained at the expense of the State. If the physical and mental development of the child has not rendered him fit to receive the instruction imparted to the class as a whole, his presence in the school will be of no profit to him, but it will hamper the progress of others. A modern State catering for mass education can hardly afford to maintain schools where very young children requiring individual care and attention can be profitably instructed.

India has adopted the lower age-limit of compulsion at 6. Whether that should be so will be discussed later. In the meanwhile, it is necessary that a rigid ban should be placed on the admission of children below that age to schools maintained free by the State. Such children can very well go to fee-paying schools if they can afford to pay for their education. But schools financed wholly from public funds must be reserved for only those who can profit by the methods and conditions of instruction which the State can afford to maintain in such schools from time to time. In spite of this imperative necessity of restricting admission to pupils above a particular age, it is seen that 25 per cent of the children in the 1st year class are below that age. It is not known what proportion of them is in private schools, but it can be presumed that most of them are in schools maintained by the State or mostly with the help of the State. Admission of immature pupils leads to waste and the extent of such waste cannot be small where the number of pupils below the age of 6 comes to 25 per cent of the total number of pupils in the 1st year class. Besides, there is also another economic aspect of the question. The 25 per cent of pupils below 6 who are today attending primary schools in India, are not only absorbing 25 per cent

of the State's expenditure on the 1st year class with less profit to themselves and thus causing great waste, but they are keeping out of school an equal number of pupils of ages 6 and above. If they are kept waiting for a year or so, it will be possible to make room for an equal number of children of 6 and above. Such children have a greater claim on public funds, and the money spent on them would yield better results.

In most countries where compulsory education is enforced, children are not admitted to the State schools until they attain the prescribed age. In Japan, for instance, when the lower age-limit is 6, to prevent over-enthusiastic parents from making their children commence education at too early an age, a strict rule rigidly enforced is laid down that no child who is under 6 years of age is to be admitted to a public elementary school. Again, in countries where compulsory education has not yet been introduced owing to financial difficulties, such a rule has also been adopted for the better utilization of educational funds. For instance, in the Philippines a child is not admitted to a State school unless he is 7 years old and the rule is strictly enforced.

Britain's long and intimate contact with India has been responsible for transplanting to the Indian soil certain educational ideas suited perhaps to the conditions in England, but entirely unsuited to the conditions prevailing in this country. The British admitted children below the prescribed age-limit (5) to schools because they could afford it. Later on, however, the British had to give option to the Local Authorities to refuse admissions below 6.[102] Yet young children do attend schools to some extent [103] and the British nation has to make special provision for such very young children to be taught under conditions of schooling where they can profitably be looked after. This again they could do because they could command the necessary funds. In India, the British administrators permitted very young children to attend schools perhaps because they thought it was a good thing after the British fashion. They even styled the lowest class as 'Infants' after the British practice and further divided it into 'Junior Infants' and 'Senior Infants'. Years passed before the idea of mass education arose in this country. It is now realised that the British practice of admitting very young children will not work in a poor country like India. But here again the force of tradition has exerted itself. The Indian people do not respond to the advice of not sending very young children to schools, having been themselves brought up in contrary traditions.

People who send their children at a very young age (below 6) to schools do so with several motives. A few there are who may be anxious to see their children initiated into education at an early age so that they may complete their education early and enter life with a distinct advan-

102. *Mass Education in India*—Parulekar, p. 11. (This volume pp. 51-52.)
103. About 11 per cent of the pupils in 'Infants' were of ages below 5 in 1936 (*Year Book of Education,* 1938, p. 45).

tage. But such persons would be themselves educated and could afford to make suitable provision for the early schooling of their children in schools where special provision is obtained and where the State spends nothing or contributes a small portion of the expenditure. A large number of people who are anxious to send their children very early to schools do so with the desire of keeping away the children from creating 'mischief' at home. Whether it is proper to fritter away public money for ensuring 'peace and quiet' in the homes of these people is a question which the State must seriously consider. There is a third section of the people who wish to use the school as a *creche*—a place where they can safely deposit their youngsters while they are at work. In this connection Mr. R. S. Weir writes: "Where there is a school, there is supervision and shelter for a small boy still unable to earn much who can be safely stowed away with the master while his parents go out to the fields. The school is a *creche*." [104] While these people deserve our sympathy we cannot allow them to use the school for a purpose for which it is not maintained. It is simply waste of public funds which are so insufficient. "The admission of boys under six years of age should be definitely discouraged. Little is gained by sending children to school prematurely." [105]

The Burma Education Reorganization Committee are most emphatic on this question. They want to prevent parents from entering a wrong age to gain early admission. They recommend: "Children who have not completed six years of age should not be enrolled and should be excluded, without exception, from the class rooms. Birth certificates should be called for. When they are not available and a Deputy Inspector of Schools is of opinion that the age of a child is under six, the child should be excluded unless the guardian is able to satisfy the Deputy Inspector of Schools that the child has completed 6 years of age." [106]

The main argument in support of the exclusion of children under 6 is that they are not ripe physically and mentally for the kind of instruction that is possible to be given in a school imparting mass education. But there is another ground on which exclusion of young children from the 1st year class can be advocated. Sir George Anderson says: "Most reports refer to the neglect of children in the infants class and point out that this class, composed as it usually is of pupils of varying ages and attainments, is often unmanageable. The first reform would be to ensure that pupils join school at the same time in the year and that, as far as possible, they are of the same age." [107]

---

104. Report on Primary Education in the U.P. (1934), p. 13.
105. ibid., p. 18.
106. Report, p. 21.
107. *Progress of Education in India for 1927-32*, p. 144.

There is no doubt that a teacher's work is very much facilitated, and it produces far better results, if he has to handle a class composed of pupils of the same mental growth. This principle applies to the teaching of all the early classes, although it applies with much greater force to the 1st year class. To secure such homogeneity, it is necessary not only to exclude children below 6, but it is also necessary to exclude those who are, say, two or three years older than the six-year-old child. Such a rule exists in the Dutch East Indies and it appears that it has already had a salutary effect.

The general opinion in India as regards the lower age-limit for admission to school is that it should be 6; for that is the age generally prescribed in Compulsory Education Acts. Although Indian schools admit a considerable number of children below that age to the 1st year class, it may be hoped that sooner or later this harmful practice will be abandoned.

Most of the countries of the world have now adopted compulsory education and have, according to their individual needs, fixed lower age-limits for compulsion as shown below:

(1) Countries which have fixed 6 as the lower age-limit:

England (option for 5); France; Germany; Italy; Belgium; U.S.A. (2 States); Australia (4 States); Japan; Mexico; and Spain.

(2) Countries which have fixed 7 as the lower age-limit:

Sweden; Norway; Denmark; Finland; Poland; Switzerland (6 permissive); Holland; Greece; Portugal; Rumania; Peru; U.S.A. (28 States); Canada (3 Provinces); Brazil; South African Union; Australia (3 States); Turkey; Egypt; Federated Malay States; and Siam.

(3) Countries which have fixed 8 and over as the lower age-limit:

U.S.S.R.; U.S.A. (18 States); and Canada (2 Provinces).

The above list will show that highly industrialised countries have fixed the lower limit at 6; while most of the agricultural countries as well as countries which are just developing or which have a scattered population have fixed it at 7 or above. In some of the latter countries, a further latitude is given to the rural population.

It stands to reason that India should not follow England and the other highly industrialised countries in the adoption of the lower age-limit. The main occupation in India is agriculture and she is a land of villages. Therefore, it is but right that India should follow in this respect countries which have a similar economic background. It will, therefore, be wise to fix the lower age-limit at 7 and not at 6. Where conditions demand it, it may even be 8.

It would not be venturesome to say that children below the age of 7 are not physically and mentally fit to receive education imparted to them under conditions of schooling that now obtain in the vast majority of Indian schools. If it be possible to have schools where individual attention could be given, if cheerful atmosphere and occupations that interest young children below 7 were provided under sympathetic and well-trained teachers, there would be no objection to admitting children of 6 or even of a lower age. Looking at the problem purely from the point of view of the acceleration of mass literacy, in the present economic and social conditions of the country, it seems imperative that the children to be admitted to schools must be well developed physically and mentally to grasp what is taught to them in a class as a whole and that too within the limited time which a teacher weighed with the burden of teaching other classes can conveniently spare for them.

Those who are acquainted with the theory and practice of mental testing, know that a child acquires a certain amount of knowledge irrespective of his being in a school. Mental growth continues and it does not necessarily require the aid of a school. The school comes in for imparting traditional knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic and of other informative subjects. Children of 7 or 8 are so much mentally developed by this natural process of learning that they can learn more quickly and with greater certainty of retention the traditional knowledge given in a school than children of 5 or 6. This, of course, applies to the average child.

This view finds ample support in the testimony available in other countries of the world. A Committee of Experts in Switzerland, appointed to investigate scientifically the problem of the school-age, has come to the following conclusion: "All those competent to judge emphasized the fact that in many cases children are not yet ripe for school at the age of 6." [108]

Referring to the physical aspect of the age of admission, it is stated: "The development of the organs of the senses also is still incomplete in the six-year-old child. The eye of the child is by nature long-sighted. If then it has to adjust itself too early to close work, as in the case at school, this may give rise to derangements of the nervous system. The same remarks apply to the development of kinesthetic feeling. The six-year-old child has often insufficient command over its voluntary muscles, to the extent required by school work. This often finds expression in derangements of speech and manual clumsiness. A warning is uttered against treating early maturity as genuine intellectual ability. There is then a danger of development without sufficient maturity. A year more or less of quiet development and undisturbed growth means much; indeed every month is important. The seven-year-old child is from every

108. *Year Book of Education* (London), 1937, pp. 765-766.

point of view superior to the six-year-old. . . . From the medical point of view, the age of six is, therefore, to be described as definitely too early for admission to school." [109]

These views are further endorsed by Swiss Pedagogues as will be seen from the following extract: "The experience gained every year with six-year-old children confirms the fact that they are generally not yet fit for school. They tire quickly both physically and mentally and it frequently happens that a child who has started too young and has been described by its parents as very forward fails after a short time and is overtaken by other children. Moreover, in many cases, the harm done only becomes apparent later, i.e. on transfer to a middle-grade school." [110]

Mr. Chaturvedi, after a careful statistical study of the infant class pupils, writes: "In the infants class the group below 6.79 years is eliminated to the extent of 72.5 per cent or about three-fourths. So that the progress of boys below seven years is extremely precarious. Of the boys between the ages 6.79 and 7.73, 54.2 per cent or more than half are withdrawn before they reach Class I (the second year class). In other words, boys less than eight years of age have a greater chance of being thrown out than reaching Class I. The minimum age of six is too young for education on a voluntary basis. It should be raised to at least eight years. The older boys fare much better in the Infants Class." [111]

On the question of 'Admitting Beginners to Schools' Mr. Washburn, an American educationist, remarks: "We have conducted experiment as to the efficient time for children to begin reading and have found . . . that it pays to wait until the child has reached a mental age of 6½ years." [112]

The Indian child enters on a new phase of life when he is about 7 or 8 years old from the point of view of his physical well-being as will be seen from the following figures: [113]

Age	Mortality per cent
4	2.74
5	1.93
6	1.45
7	1.15
8	0.94
9	0.83
10	0.79
11	0.81
12	0.84

109. ibid. 110. ibid.
111. *An Educational Survey of a District*, p. 187.
112. *Adjusting the School to the Child*, p. 156.
113. Extracted from the Life-table for All-India (males) in the Census Report, 1931, Vol. I, Part I, p. 173.

This resistance to disease and death is definitely strengthened when the child is 7 years old and it continues to grow stronger from the eighth to the tenth year after which it again decreases. The age period 8-10 is the best part of a child's life from the point of view of resistance to mortality. His mental vigour also grows with the physical, and, therefore, his 'education' can best be commenced between the age period 7-8. Before that age period, he is in a comparatively weak condition, both physically and mentally.

Another confirmation of this physio-psychological fact is supplied by the Hindu Scriptures, where it is laid down for guidance of parents that a Brahmin child should begin his education when he is 8 years old from the time of conception, i.e. when he is more than 7 years old. According to the ancient custom, the Brahmin boy had to devote far more time to learning than the boys of other classes; but even so, the age prescribed was above 7. Would it not be true to say that the ancient writer of these Scriptures must have based the age of formal learning on extensive observations and experience? The cult of learning in India among certain classes and communities has been carried on uninterruptedly from times immemorial. It would appear that it was only in the nineties of the last century when the infants class was introduced into the Indian educational system that people began to send their children to school at ages earlier than 7 and that the practice has now grown too strong to be eradicated.

It is of interest to note here that the Zakir Husain Committee on the Wardha Scheme reiterates this ancient Indian practice in the matter of the age of admission to education: "After careful consideration, we have come to the conclusion that seven plus will be the proper age to enforce compulsion." [114]

The lower age-limit prescribed for compulsion in most countries of the world and especially in those having a similar social and economic background to that of India is 7 or more. Such evidence as is available as regards the most suitable age of admission from the point of view of physical fitness and mental retentiveness also favours an age of admission not below 7. Actual research into the problem of the proper age at which the mind of the child is sufficiently receptive points in the direction of the age of 7. Taking Indian experience purely, Mr. Chaturvedi's investigations also lead to the same conclusion. The Census mortality figures for India doubly support the claim of this age, for they conclusively show that below the age of 7 the exposure to the risk of death is very much greater. The hoary antiquity of the Indian Scriptures does not also fail to lend its support to this view. And the latest support, if further support were required, is given by

---

114. *Educational Reconstruction* (Vora & Co.), p. 36 (of the Report).

the findings of the Zakir Husain Committee. In view of such conclusive evidence one cannot but come to the conclusion that for India, so far as mass education is concerned, the most suitable age of admission is 7 or above.

X. THE SINGLE-TEACHER SCHOOL

The single-teacher school is yet another important problem that figures prominently in discussions relating to Indian mass education. The magnitude of the problem can be gauged from the fact that one out of two primary schools in India today is a single-teacher school. They are confined almost wholly to villages, and as India is a land of villages the problem appears to be still more serious. In the whole of India there are more than $6\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of villages. Out of them, villages with a population of 500 and below are about 5 lakhs, with a total population of about $6\frac{1}{2}$ crores, which gives an average population of 130 souls to a village. Assuming that two such villages are grouped for school purposes, they cannot between them supply more than 40 pupils (boys and girls) of school-going age. These figures clearly show that in our present financial conditions, whether one likes it or not, the single-teacher school is an inevitable necessity.

The course of Indian primary education went on placidly till about 1912 and no serious thought was given as to whether the single-teacher school had succeeded in promoting literacy. Since then the various aspects of the system have been receiving attention and evoking discussion. The problem of the single-teacher school, accordingly, received its first mention in the 'Progress of Education in India for 1912-17'.[115]

In the next issue of the Progress (1917-22), the problem did receive specific mention [116] under the heading 'The disheartening task of the solitary teacher' and among other things the inefficiency of the ordinary village school was attributed to "the excessive number of classes assigned to a single teacher". Here is the first definite mention of the evils of a single-teacher school. Yet the writer (J. A. Richey) did not go to the length of condemning it wholesale. He just mentioned its defects. Thereafter the Royal Commission on Agriculture went in for a wholesale condemnation of the single-teacher school. The Commission say : "We entirely agree with those educational authorities who hold that no primary school can be efficient which has less than two teachers." After referring to the financial aspect of this question, the Commission further say : "But nothing is to be gained by failure to face the fact that a village which has a primary school with only one teacher might almost as well be without a school at all." [117]

115. Vol. I, p. 123.
116. Vol. I, p. 116.
117. Report, p. 525.

The Agricultural Commission were persuaded to express this view,[118] it appears, from what they heard about the Punjab where a policy of discouraging the growth of lower primary schools had been going on for some time, with a view to accelerating the growth of a six-class lower middle school or an eight-class upper middle school. The Commission were informed that "a marked improvement in the standard of primary education had been effected in the Punjab" by the adoption of the policy. Now improvement in the standard of education may mean one of the two things: increase in the rate of literacy or increase in the number of graduates of the six-year and eight-year class schools. If the latter is the meaning of the expression "improvement in the standard of primary education", certainly the Punjab deserves praise; but if the Punjab means by that expression that she has effected improvement in the rate of increase in literacy, the matter is very much open to doubt. The literacy of the Punjab, as of other Provinces, as recorded in the Census Reports, has hardly anything to do with the number of pupils that may be attracted to the upper primary classes. The increase in literacy will entirely depend upon the number of pupils the Punjab will be able to promote from the lower classes to the 3rd year class, or at the most, to the 4th year class and to keep them there for a year. If the Punjab be of the opinion that she would rather have less ordinary literates, but more of 'better' literates, one would have nothing to say. But the Punjab cannot add to its literacy by neglecting a rapid increase in the 3rd or 4th year class pupils by discouraging the growth of a lower type of school just to foster that of schools with upper classes. The Punjab Census Report of 1921 contains the following pertinent observation: "Thus while extra-scholastic literates below 20 have decreased by 19,000 persons, consequent on the closing down of many private educational institutions during the decade, there has been a very slight increase in the numbers of extra-scholastic literates of all ages. The result suggests that the efforts of the Department of Education to increase the literacy of the Province have been almost completely nullified by the diminution in the private educational enterprise." [119]

The opinion of the Agricultural Commission regarding the single-teacher schools aroused keen dissatisfaction about them. The Hartog Committee which followed practically repeated the view of the Agricultural Commission, though it did so in more cautious terms. The Committee said: "It may be that, in favourable circumstances, with a good teacher trained in methods of plural class teaching, a school of this type serves a useful purpose, but we cannot think that there is much promise of effective progress in a system which depends so predominantly on schools of this type. A teacher who is untrained and

118. Report, p. 526.

119. Vol. I, pp. 293-294.

of meagre qualifications and who can obtain little or no assistance from the inspecting staff, cannot be expected single-handed to teach several classes with a large number of pupils, very unequally distributed among these classes." [120]

The 'Progress of Education in India for 1922-27' was published simultaneously with the Report of the Hartog Committee and it also lent its support to the views of the Commission and the Committee. It says: "One of the major causes of the wastage and stagnation is the extremely large number of schools particularly in rural areas which have only one teacher in charge not merely of a large number of classes but of a large number of pupils in each class." [121]

This powerful condemnation of the single-teacher school proved infectious and "practically every (Provincial) report condemned the single-teacher school which was often an extravagance and usually ineffective".[122] This is the position where the single-teacher school stands today in official and non-official circles.

The 'Progress of Education' for 1922-27 and for 1927-32 reveal a series of struggles put up by some of the Provinces to get rid of single-teacher schools or at least lessen their number. But again and again the struggle had to be given up, in most cases for financial reasons, and in others, owing to opposition from the public. It appears that the position has remained unchanged since the Agricultural Commission recorded their memorable condemnation of the single-teacher schools nearly 10 years ago. This is not surprising because those who advocate their abolition or amalgamation and consolidation have failed to visualise their indispensable place in the framework of the Indian educational system. The right approach to the problem is to mend these schools rather than to end them. This view is supported by Messrs. Richey and Subba Rao as will be seen from the following quotations. Mr. Richey says: "Now if these statements are true, we may well despair of the future of rural education in India; for nothing is more certain than that if education is ultimately to reach the more backward and sparsely inhabited tracts, it must be by means of the single-teacher schools, no other type is economically possible. But, of course, these statements are very exaggerated. We have evidence enough in the thousands of good single-teacher schools in the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa. I have inspected a number of such schools in South Africa, and more, I have visited many good single-teacher schools in India itself; still no one will deny that such teachers are set a bad task." [123]

---

120. Report, pp. 61-62. 121. Vol. I, p. 133.
122. *Progress of Education in India*, 1927-32, Vol. I, p. 145.
123. *Asiatic Review*, January 1929, p. 89.

Mr. N. S. Subba Rao, the then D.P.I. of Mysore, in his Annual Report for 1933-34, recognises in unmistakable terms the importance of these single-teacher schools in the Indian educational system. After referring to the U.S.A., where even today nearly 40 per cent of the primary schools are single-teacher schools, he says: "If this is the condition of the things in a country so rich and so well provided with excellent means of communications as the United States of America, any scheme of reorganization and consolidation in Mysore or India where single-teacher schools are numerous, must accept, for years to come, such schools as an inevitable part of the scheme of things and attempt to attain the maximum possible efficiency on the basis of such schools." [124]

If it is inevitable to work within the framework of the single-teacher schools, it would be pertinent to consider what reforms are necessary and desirable in order to get the best out of them. Certain reforms such as the restriction of admissions to only once a year in the 1st year class, and the prescribing of a minimum age of 7 have already been discussed.

The principal solution of the problem will, however, lie in the simplification of and less rigid adherence to the prescribed curricula. It is common knowledge that under the existing rules of the Educational Departments even in a single-teacher school the teacher is required to teach the different classes separately by strictly adhering to the curriculum for each class. *Prima facie*, therefore, if there are five classes in the school, he cannot devote more than one hour to each. An hour's instruction per class is obviously insufficient. If, therefore, there is to be more learning and more teaching, a way out would be to allow the teacher a certain amount of latitude in respect of the curriculum which will enable him to take two or more classes together in a common subject. While this may not be possible in all subjects, it would not only be possible but most desirable in the case of others. For instance, take the case of reading and writing. The arts of reading and writing are perfected by practice and it is in the amount of practice that the difference in the intensity and quality of such instruction lies. Suppose a book is being read by two classes simultaneously and the teacher explains things to both the classes. Although apparently both the classes seem to do the same work, the mental attitude and reaction of the 5th year class to what is being taught will be different from those of the 4th year class pupils. That is the difference in the apparent similarity of the situation.

What is advocated here already exists in most of the one-teacher schools outside India. For instance: "In some of the one-teacher

124. Report, p. 35.

schools in U.S.A., there are all the eight grades of an elementary school; and yet the work is conducted fairly satisfactorily. This is because of its better ways of organising the work. For example, the . . . Experimental School . . . has the following three-group organization: Group A comprising the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, Group B comprising the fourth and fifth grades, and Group C comprising the first, second and third grades. The group is also flexible. Certain grades recite separately in certain subjects; and in other subjects four or five grades are combined to have joint recitations. The first grade is always a class by itself in reading." [125]

What is advocated here is not the multi-class or plural-class teaching, where, for instance, the teacher sets sums to solve to Class III, gives writing work to Class IV, handwork to Class I, while he takes the 5th class in recitation and leaves the 2nd class in the garden (if there be one) to learn nature study or asks them to go out and play games themselves. This simultaneous handling of the five classes requires extraordinary ability on the part of the teacher and it is too much to expect such ability from the common run of the teaching profession. It therefore follows, if immediate improvement in the situation is to be effected, that the group-system advocated above will have to be resorted to.

The system of grouping classes would be found of use not only in one-teacher schools but also in two- or three-teacher schools. On this subject, Dr. Dunn observes as follows: "The one- and two-teacher schools, at present the chief educational agency provided for rural children, labour under an additional and unnecessary handicap from the necessity of using curricula made for graded school organization. As long as one- and two-teacher schools exist, they should be provided with the curricula organized by groups to fit their practical needs, and not only by grades according to the convenience of the city graded schools." [126]

It is indeed most incomprehensible that in India a curriculum of a particular class, framed entirely on the supposition that there is one teacher in charge of one class for the full day and for all the working days, should be made applicable to that particular class in a single-teacher school where hardly an hour a day can be given by the teacher in charge of that class. But the fact of the matter is that this absurdity is universally practised in this country. It may be argued that the authorities do not insist on the whole of the prescribed curriculum being covered. If this is so, it is indeed a most undesirable thing. Let the authorities deal straight with the situation and tell the teacher exactly

---

125. *Reconstructing Elementary Education in Mysore*—M. Siddalingaiya, pp. 149-150. (Useful hints on this subject will be found on these pages of the book under reference.)

126. Quoted by Siddalingaiya, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

what they expect of him. The best solution of the problem would appear to be in the replacement of an imposed curriculum by one framed by the teacher himself, within certain very broad limits. It is only then that the single-teacher schools will do their work properly and contribute their due share to the educational uplift of the masses. What is wanted is an entire change in the outlook.

In the pre-British system of Indian education, the entire school was one class. There were no 'standards'. Again, every single pupil had to be the tutor to one below him. In fact, the common school of the time was a mutually helping society with the teacher at the head. The single-teacher school worked well and it did impart to the children attending a sort of instruction which was enough for their wants. It is worthwhile taking the help of this old Indian system to some extent especially in some minor processes of learning.

A successful working of the group-teaching advocated here presupposes training in this method of teaching to the existing teachers. This could be arranged through vacation or refresher courses. To ensure its success it will also be necessary to provide adequately for effective supervision and guidance. No supervisor can be expected to supervise properly if he is entrusted with more than fifty one-teacher schools.

XI. DURATION OF SCHOOL LIFE

An important problem relating to mass education is the duration of school life. How long does a child stay in a school? While considering this question, the period of stay in a school must be in reference to children studying upto a certain class. If it is presumed that the 4th year class is the upper limit of the minimum primary education, children learning upto that class only must be considered. Some children may stay for 4, 5 or even 6 years, if they are detained in some classes. Others may stay for a year only; while others may have spent a year in each of the four classes. To ascertain the duration of school life, one has, therefore, to take into consideration all such cases.

The earliest attempt to determine the duration of school life of an Indian school child was made by Sir Henry Sharp in his 'Progress of Education in India' for 1907-12.[127] In the subsequent issue of the Progress for 1912-17 he revised his previous method of calculation.[128]

His calculations were for the full course of seven years. He showed that the average length of school life was 3.8 years. If his method is applied to children in the first four classes only the figure comes to 2.8, and if applied to first three classes only it comes to 2.4 years. It is curious that in the subsequent quinquennial issues of the Progress no

127. Vol. I, p. 140 and Vol. II, p. 161.
128. Vol. I, p. 122 and Vol. II, p. 89.

mention is made of this definite figure (3.8) of the duration of school life. The Progress for 1917-22 discusses the question in general.[129] The Progress for 1922-27 makes an important difference between duration of school life in general and its *effective duration*.[130] A child may stay in the first class for two years, in the second for two, and in the third and fourth for one year each. Although his numerical duration of school life comes to six, his effective duration is only four. What is required, therefore, is to increase the effective duration and not merely the duration. The latest issue of the Progress (1927-32) casually discusses the question, but the remarks made are most significant as they offer an explanation of the short duration of school life.

"Owing to the poverty of the masses the length of time in which parents can afford to keep their children in school is limited. As soon as children reach an age when they become of economic value to the household they have to leave school, no matter what stage they have reached in their education. It therefore follows that, if the maximum benefit is to be received from the money spent on primary education and on the time spent by the children at school, the attendance of pupils should be as regular as possible, thereby enabling them to obtain promotion from class to class in the shortest possible time before their assistance in family duties has become of economic value." [131]

The method adopted by Sir Henry Sharp is based on very broad considerations and many assumptions. But recently, Mr. S. N. Chaturvedi has investigated the problem critically, basing his calculations on the cases of about 30,000 children in the Etawah (U.P.) district. His conclusions are: "Of the 30,243 cases investigated, 13,126 or 43.4 per cent leave within a year of joining school. . . . Those leaving before three years . . . amount to 76.9 per cent . . . the average life of a boy in primary schools is only one year ten months, so that a boy spends less than two years in the school before going back to his fields and pastures. The school has demonstrated its inability to keep him for a longer time." [132]

With the help of figures of pupils on the roll and pupils promoted in the Bombay Presidency, the following average stay of a pupil in each of the first four classes is obtained for the year 1926-27:

Class	Average stay of a pupil in the class (years)
I	1.5
II	1.26
III	1.36
IV	1.35

129. Vol. I, p. 117. 130. Vol. I, p. 123. 131. Vol. I, p. 140.
132. *An Educational Survey of a District*, p. 184.

From this it may be inferred that a pupil in Bombay spends on an average—

in the 1st year class	..		1.5 years
in the 2nd „ „	..	(1.5 +1.26)	2.76 „
in the 3rd „ „	..	(2.76+1.36)	4.12 „
in the 4th „ „	..	(4.12+1.35)	5.47 „

This table does not give the average duration of school life of a pupil, but it shows that a pupil who is able to stay in the 3rd year class for a year spends on an average more than four years in the school. It also shows that the parents of the children who are in the 2nd year class in Bombay have to keep their children in schools for nearly three years. If, therefore, proper precautions are taken to secure promotions from class to class, almost all of the children in the 2nd year class can be given effective education for three years and those in the 3rd year class, for four years. So far as Bombay is concerned, and leaving aside the pupils who leave school altogether from the 1st year class, it is not so much the unwillingness of the parent to make the necessary sacrifice that comes in the way of the child's acquiring literacy, but it is more the ineffective schooling expressed in large percentage of failures that is at fault. Those who blame the parents for their apathy will see that it is not so much the parents but the system of schooling that deserves the greatest share of blame for failure of education or 'wastage' as it is called.

It might be of interest to note here the duration of school life in some of the Eastern countries.

In the Philippine Islands: "On the average a child remains less than three years" (at school).[133]

Of Indo-China it is said: "The vast majority of children cannot really devote more than three years to school." [134]

The duration of school life of a primary school pupil in India would roughly work out between two and three years for children in the first four classes. This means that in the majority of cases an Indian parent, poor though he be, is willing to spare his child for schooling for a period of years which will not exceed three. In a poor country like India the period of compulsory education must not be far in excess of that for which the parent can spare the child for schooling. In India this period seems to be about three years. Sir George Anderson has aptly observed: "Owing to the poverty of the masses the length of time in which parents can afford to keep their children in schools is limited." [135]

---

133. *The Survey of the Educational System of the Philippines*, p. 132.
134. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1931*, p. 508.
135. *Progress of Education in India, 1927-32*, Vol. I, p. 140.

For some other countries of the world possessing similar economic background the period of schooling for which a child is spared by the parents is also about three years as will be seen from the following: "School statistics in the Dutch East Indies, in Indo-China, in British India, in Siam, in the Philippine Islands, in the rural district of France, Italy and the U.S. (especially in the Southern and the South-Western States) show that the majority of the rural students do not go further than the third grade." [136]

In fact, the failure of many of the schemes of compulsory education in certain areas, small or big, may be attributed to some extent to this maladjustment between the forces used for the uplift and the economic forces which govern the life of the people with an iron hand.

XII. NEED FOR RAPID EXPANSION

The following table shows at a glance the progress of primary education in British India during the years 1882 to 1932:

Year	Pupils in recognised primary schools	Percentage to total population
1882 ..	22,00,000	1.1
1902 ..	32,00,000	1.4
1922 ..	63,00,000	2.6
1932 ..	94,00,000	3.3

For the sake of comparison similar figures for some countries in the East are given below:

The Philippine Islands.—Here the present system of education was inaugurated in 1901 only. There is no compulsory education in the Islands.

Year	Pupils in primary schools	Percentage to total population
1900 ..	(Hardly any)	..
1901 ..	1,50,000	1.5
1911 ..	6,07,000	6.0
1921 ..	9,24,000	8.0

The Dutch East Indies.—In this country the system of mass education was inaugurated in about 1909. Compulsion has not been introduced so far.

136. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1937*, p. 95.

Year	Pupils in primary schools	Percentage to total population
1909 ..	3,17,000	..
1912 ..	6,23,000	1.4
1924 ..	11,07,000	..
1935 ..	17,87,000	2.8

China.—China was declared a Republic in 1912, and with the coming of the Republic the number of pupils in primary schools began to rise by leaps and bounds.

Year	Pupils in primary schools	Percentage to total population
1912 ..	28,00,000	..
1922 ..	66,00,000	..
1931 ..	1,17,00,000	(about 3)

In Egypt, the rise is most remarkable. In 1928, the total number of pupils in the primary or elementary schools was about 3 lakhs and in 1938 it rose to about 10 lakhs. The population of Egypt in 1927 was 1,42,00,000.

Japan took up the question of mass education in about 1872 and within the first 6 years there was a 100 per cent rise in the number of pupils which rose from 11,46,000 in 1873 to 23,00,000 in 1879.

In England (and Wales) also, the policy of spreading mass education was adopted by the State in about 1871 when there were in recognised primary schools about 18,00,000 pupils. In 1881 the number rose to 40,00,000. The difference, however, between England and the other countries mentioned above was this. Even in 1871 England had in schools about 8 per cent of the population; while the other countries mentioned above, including Japan, had hardly one per cent of the population in schools to begin with.

From the statistics given above one peculiarity about India, as compared with the other countries, may be noted. In no period of Indian education during the last 50 years has the expansion been as rapid as in the other countries. In Japan, within the first six years, the rise was more than 100 per cent. In China within the first decade, the rise was more than 100 per cent. In the Philippines in the first decade it was more than 400 per cent and in the Dutch East Indies within only the first three years it was 100 per cent. The example of Korea, after its annexation by Japan in 1910, is also worth

noting. From 1909 to 1919 the number of pupils rose from 16,000 to 89,000 and from 89,000 it rose in 1929 to 4,50,000, thus recording a rise of 500 per cent during each of the two decades. These countries seem to have a firm faith in *rapid expansion* of mass education; while in India opinion seems to veer in the direction that until India can produce a fool-proof system no special effort should be made to bring about rapid expansion.

Not only the example of other countries but their educational history also shows that rapid expansion must precede all other educational reforms. India has never realised the greatest truth in mass education that slow progress is no progress at all. "Education can be so gradual as to allow the educated few to be absorbed afresh by the inertia and habits of the uninstructed mass. Education produces its best effect not when it trickles slowly but when it is rapidly universalised."[137] The great truth can be illustrated easily. If we want to root out weeds from a big field so as to make it cultivable, we cannot achieve our object by uprooting a weed here or a weed there each day. By the time we proceed a little, the small spots cleared will have a fresh crop of weeds and this process will be almost endless. There is another reason which demands rapid expansion. It has been shown that in India nearly 75 per cent of the new literates produced by schools are not directly reflected in the percentage of literacy because of the high birth and death rate. Gaps rapidly created must be filled up with greater rapidity. Otherwise, progress is bound to be slow or at a standstill as at present.

It is often urged that a rapid increase in the number of pupils in schools does not necessarily mean a proportionate increase in the number of literates. This argument may perhaps hold to some extent when the number of pupils in schools is vastly increased. At present, however, even under the existing conditions of wastage and stagnation, if the numbers in schools are doubled the output of literates will also be doubled. Irrespective of other things, an increase in the enrolment is bound to result in a proportionate increase in literates. The proper policy should be simultaneously to attempt to stop wastage and to get on with rapid expansion.

A more pertinent question would be: "Granting that rapid expansion of mass education is necessary, can India afford it?" This is a question which must be faced squarely. In 1932, the total expenditure on primary education in British India was about 8 crores of rupees and the percentage of pupils in primary schools to the total population was 3.3 If 14 per cent of the population is to be in schools as it ought to be, British India will have to spend more than four times

137. *The Democratic Progress*—Beni Prasad, pp. 169-170.

the present amount, i.e. more than 32 crores of rupees, if the present scales of expenditure are adhered to..[138]

Granting that rapid expansion is a supreme necessity and that there are not at our disposal sufficient funds for such expansion, what would be the most suitable remedies to adopt?

XIII. THE NUMBER OF PUPILS PER TEACHER

The foremost question which deserves consideration in any scheme for rapid expansion of mass education is the proportion of teachers to pupils. It is well known that in India, as also in other parts of the world, the major part of the expenditure on primary education (in India nearly 80 per cent) is on the pay of teachers.

What is the present situation in India? In 1932, there were in the primary schools of British India 27 pupils per teacher on an average. During the 30 years 1902 to 1932, the figure has been practically the same. It may further be noted that this number (27) is the average number *on roll* and not the average of actual attendance which is necessarily smaller.

This question of the number of pupils per teacher has been authoritatively dealt with by the League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts in their report—The Reorganization of Education in China. This report was prepared by four distinguished educational experts from four European countries: Germany, France, Poland and England. Under the heading Rational Utilization of Schools the Mission observe: "Considering the great lack of schools in China and the large numbers of children that from year to year cannot obtain access to those there are, it is astonishing what little advantage is on the whole taken of the schools and means of education actually at country's disposal. . . . If the number of pupils to each teacher was increased from 20 to 40, then with the same means as at present it would be possible to teach not 8,785,000 pupils, but 17,570,000 children, and by raising the scale to 50, which would still be a lower figure than in many countries that lead in education, it would be possible with these very same means to teach over 22 million children." [139]

"Not less extravagant is the number of teachers in relation to the number of pupils. This is a matter of importance, as the salaries of teachers constitute the major part of the total expenditure on primary education. In China far fewer pupils fall to the share of one primary school teacher than is usual in countries where general education is more advanced. In China as a whole there are 20.3 pupils

---

138. Valuable suggestions on the Problem of Finance are made by Mr. Dinkar Desai of the Servants of India Society in his recent book—*Primary Education in India.*
139. p. 62.

to one teacher, whereas in many countries of a high standard of education there are 2 to 3 times as many. This should mean that in the same conditions and at the same expense between 2 and 3 times as many pupils as are actually under instruction could be dealt with by the existing staffs of teachers . . . and in the present very difficult conditions not less than 50 to 60 pupils per teacher should be taken as a basis." [140]

It may be asked, if the number of pupils per teacher can be increased in India so as to accommodate a greater number of pupils at no material additional cost, why has she not done this so far, or at least been advised to do so? The reply would be that the educational administrators of India have apparently not considered systems of mass education in other countries with a social and economic background similar to that of India. Not only that but they do not appear to have taken into account the conditions of English schools when in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the British Government made elementary education compulsory and resolved to push it through. It is well known that the British system of education in India, at least in the beginning, had little to do with the idea of mass education. It mainly catered to the needs of the classes and had necessarily to keep in mind the goal of high efficiency. This necessitated small numbers and curricula rich in cultural subjects. With the advent of popular Governments in India there is an urgent need of reconsideration of the policy which must yield place to one directed to cater for the needs and aspirations of the masses and not of the classes only.

A striking case for the acceleration of mass education is provided by Czechoslovakia which after the Great War settled down to reorganise its educational system. It began with the rule: "One teacher is provided for a maximum of 80 pupils, two where the pupils number 81 to 160 and three teachers for more than 161." This was prescribed with the full knowledge that the number was excessive, for it was soon laid down that from 1922 the number should be brought down to 70 and from 1932 to 60.[141] It is quite clear that this modern State, faced with the problem of providing educational facilities to all its children, first thought about numbers and then about other things. One more example of a newly created State in Europe, the new Polish Republic, is worth noting. Before 1918 when it was under Russia, the illiteracy percentage in Poland was nearly 50. The new State took up the question of mass education seriously and the average number of pupils assigned to one teacher was put at 50.[142] Information about the internal

140. ibid., pp. 81 and 83.
141. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1924*, p. 154.
142. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1926*, p. 315.

NOTE.—A detailed statistical account of this problem—number of pupils per teacher—is given in *Mass Education in India*—R. V. Parulekar.

organizations of other new nations is not available in greater detail; but there is no doubt that they have been shaping their educational destinies without minding the practices of their more fortunate neighbours. Adjusting the number of pupils per teacher to the economic needs of a people had been recognized to the fullest by all nations of the world, when they organised their educational systems to meet the new needs of mass education.

In the two Eastern countries—the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies—for which statistics are available, this important measure of educational administration was fully utilized from the start. The Philippines began with 80 pupils per teacher in 1906; in 1924 the number was 50 and in 1934 it was about 45. In the Dutch East Indies the figure stood in 1935 at 50. India has been maintaining an average of 27 pupils per teacher for more than a generation. It is perhaps the lowest figure in the world.

The capacity of a teacher to instruct 50 pupils at a time has been authoritatively recognised in India even as far back as 1913. In the Educational Policy of Government of India issued under a Government of India Resolution of 21st February 1913, it is laid down: "No teacher should be called on to instruct more than 50 pupils; preferably the number should be 30 or 40; and it is desirable to have a separate teacher for each class or standard."

So far as can be ascertained, this was the first official pronouncement on the problem of 'number of pupils per teacher'. Although the maximum number per teacher permitted by the Government of India Resolution is 50, the average number for the whole of British India has been 27 at least for over forty years.

The following table shows the maximum number of pupils allowed and the average number of pupils per teacher in some countries for which the relevant information is available:

Country	Maximum number allowed per teacher	Average number per teacher
England ..	60 (1894)	42 (1895)
Germany ..	80 (1896)	64 (1901)
Japan ..	70 (1906)	55 (1905)
Italy ..	60 (1932)	43 (1933)
India ..	50 (1913)	27 (all years)

N.B.—The figures in brackets indicate the year to which they relate.

In England a definite rule regarding the maximum number was laid down in 1894. Before that year the *average* number of pupils per

teacher varied from 62 to 46. Thus before 1894 the maximum number allowed must have been over 70 pupils.

From what has been stated above it will be seen that the average number of pupils per teacher varies between 70 and 80 per cent of the permitted maximum. In India, on the other hand, in spite of a lower maximum, the average is only 54 per cent of the maximum permitted. It would thus appear that this very fundamental problem has been almost completely disregarded in building up a system of mass education in India. And assuming that that was done to ensure efficiency, the results do not seem to bear out the assumption.

It may be argued that a larger number of pupils was assigned per teacher in the countries mentioned above, because the capacity of an average teacher there was far higher than in India. That is, however, very doubtful. Even upto 1894, the percentage of trained teachers in the elementary schools of England had scarcely reached 50, the percentage which obtains in India for several years. Moreover, upto 1894, the staffs of common schools in England had a large proportion of 'pupil' teachers—young boys and girls who were just out of schools and who were kept in the schools for training and made to do almost full-time work as teachers.

At the cost of repetition it may be affirmed that unless India reorganises her system of mass education so that the average number of pupils per teacher comes to a far higher figure than what it is today, there is no hope of her being able to liquidate mass illiteracy through her schools. If India wants to advance in mass education, she cannot do so unless she follows the ways trodden by countries like England and Japan in the past or now chosen by other countries of lesser note. Financing of mass education in one of the poorest countries like India, with her teeming millions who are ever increasing in numbers, is a matter which in its magnitude stands no comparison with the problems which England, Germany or even Japan had to face in the past. To expect India to solve the problem of mass education through methods which even those prosperous countries could not afford to adopt, is nothing short of trying to achieve the impossible. An immediate measure of reform is that India should adopt 60 as the maximum number of pupils instead of 50 and work up the whole system of mass education in such a way that within a few years the average number of pupils per teacher will be round about 50. If this is achieved a great stride will have been taken.

This step will have two effects. In the first place it would be possible to bring to schools nearly double the number of children without much additional cost, and secondly, the way will have been prepared for future expansion for securing the goal of universal mass education, at a cost which will be somewhere double the present cost, instead of four times as it would otherwise be.

In England, almost from the introduction of compulsory education, the rules for staffing schools have been based on the consideration of the qualifications of the teachers. A larger number of pupils was entrusted to better qualified teachers than to less qualified ones. In India, on the other hand, the system is inelastic, and larger or smaller classes have to be entrusted to a teacher according to the circumstances of each school and not according to the teacher's qualification. It is, therefore, not unusual to see that a class of 40 is entrusted to an untrained teacher and one of 20 to a trained teacher. This policy is detrimental to increasing the average number of pupils per teacher on the whole. Besides, the increase in the number of trained teachers involving additional expenditure is not compensated for by a proportionate increase in the number of pupils taught. The correct policy would be to vary the number of pupils taught by a teacher according to his qualifications.

The next question that arises is whether it is possible to increase the average number of pupils per teacher to the extent advocated above. Supposing there is a two-teacher school with say 60 pupils, would it be possible in such a school to get 30 to 40 more pupils so as to give an average of 45 to 50 pupils per teacher? So long as it is the ambition of schools to have one teacher for one class [143] irrespective of the number of pupils in that class, it will not be possible in most schools to have a larger average of pupils for one teacher. For it is proverbial that in Indian primary schools, except in big cities or towns, there is always a paucity of numbers in the upper classes and overcrowding in the lower ones. The prevailing practice seems to be to discourage combined teaching in higher classes, although the classes may be comparatively smaller. This is at the root of small number of pupils per teacher prevailing in Indian schools today. If it is realised that the higher a class, the less dependent it is on a teacher, such combinations should be possible so as to enable a teacher to have 50 to 60 pupils.

In this connection the Government of Bengal have recently come forward with a plan which deserves the serious attention of all who are interested in the expansion of mass education in India. In a recent Government publication (1937), School Education in Bengal, they have proposed to staff their schools on the following lines. Each school should ordinarily have three teachers. The average roll strength of a school shall not ordinarily exceed 135, distributed approximately as follows:

Class I	..	..	..	..	40
Class II	..	..	..	..	35
Class III	..	..	..	..	30
Class IV	..	..	..	..	30

143. *Vide* the Rule in the Indian Educational Policy, 1913, quoted on page 115.

An ordinary Indian school with such a strength is given 4 teachers; as a result, the number of pupils per teacher comes to 34. The Bengal Government propose to give such a school only 3 teachers, thus bringing up the number of pupils per teacher to 45. This is indeed a bold step and, if it is put into execution, Bengal will show a way to India towards rapid expansion of mass education.

Bombay has recently revised its rule for staffing primary schools and thus has now gone up to the maximum number of 50 which was laid down in the Government of India Resolution of 1913.

The Director of Public Instruction, Bombay, says in his Report for 1932-37: "According to Primary Education Rule 57(1) the number of pupils on the rolls of a class and, if a teacher is in charge of more than one class, the total number on rolls in all such classes is not to exceed 40. In 1936, however, Government informed the Local Authorities that strict observance of this rule would not be insisted upon and that the Local Authorities would be permitted to raise the figure to 50 with the permission of the Education Inspector."[144]

It is further added: "This permission has not as yet been taken advantage of to any great extent." It may be urged upon the Bombay Government which has already gone so far as to change its old rule, to be so good as to permit the Local Authorities to take the initiative themselves instead of asking them to come to the Inspector for previous permission. For it is well known that situated as the Local Authorities are, they are not inclined to approach the Authorities for permission in such matters.

It must be admitted that the problem of staffing can be solved satisfactorily only if the teachers as a body are made to appreciate the effort made by the Educational Authorities to promote mass literacy. Because, without their whole-hearted co-operation, the Authorities will not easily succeed.

XIV. THE PART-TIME SYSTEM

An indirect method of securing the necessary increase in the average number of pupils per teacher is the system of part-time instruction. This may take various forms. The Shift System or the Double Shift System, as it is sometimes called, is one form of part-time instruction. In remote villages where the number of pupils is small, the school may be held on two or three days in the week, the teacher going to another village during the rest of the week. The object of

144. Vol. I, p. 106.

such part-time instruction should be to entrust each teacher with 50 to 60 pupils.[145]

It is well known that in Soviet Russia remarkable progress has been made in reducing illiteracy both through the instruction of adults and of school children. So far as the schools are concerned, the tremendous rush of pupils to schools forced the authorities to adopt various measures to get over the difficulties and one of the measures was to hold the schools by shifts.

"But there is still a great disparity between the comparative poverty of Russia and the great task of popular enlightenment which the country has set out to achieve within the next few years: the elimination of illiteracy and the introduction of universal compulsory primary education. As a result of this disparity, 30 per cent of the children of school age in the Soviet Union receive no education at all, while the remaining 70 per cent are taught in schools which are usually overcrowded, some of them working in two or even three shifts."[146]

China is a country which has to tackle the problem of mass education on a magnitude equal to that of India. The latest available information shows that China has resorted to some short-cut devices of schooling, the Shift System being one of them.

"During recent years, several things have been done by Government in regard to elementary education. In the first place, plan for compulsory education was adopted. Many people clearly recognised that in the present condition it would be difficult to carry out at once compulsory education for every child of school age. But it was necessary to extend compulsory education as widely as possible and one-year short course compulsory education was adopted for children of the age from 10 to 16, who missed the primary schools. Short course primary schools were established with shorter period than regular primary schools, with curriculum also comparatively simpler. In the common primary schools (first four classes) it was also proposed to have the same school work two shifts a day."[147]

In the Dutch East Indies, in the three-class village school, the hours are divided in such a way that the first half of the day is assigned to the first class and the second half to the second class and the third together, one school master—sometimes aided by an assistant—does the whole teaching.[148] This has enabled the country to secure an average of 50 pupils per teacher in the common schools.

---

145. In *Mass Education in India* by R. V. Parulekar a fairly exhaustive account of this system as practised in the various countries of the world at certain stages of their educational development has been given. Here the discussion will be confined to the system as it is actually practised today in India and abroad.

146. *Soviet Russia* by W. H. Chamberlain (Duckworth), London, 1930, p. 280.

147. *The Chinese Year Book, 1935-36*, p. 483.

148. *Asiatic Review, 1934*, p. 120.

The following account dealing with the Double Shift System in Ceylon is of interest: "The system of 'double schools' provides a practical solution to the difficulty experienced in most countries of having to extend educational facilities without incurring capital or current expenditure."

"Double schools in Ceylon have now passed the trial stage and have become a permanent feature of the educational system of the Island. No opposition has been experienced from teachers or parents and the Education Committees have given their whole-hearted support. So adaptable is the system and so great the possible scope for economy in buildings, apparatus and staff that the Department is able to face with equanimity the difficulties arising from curtailed expenditure."[149]

In Egypt: "The bulk of the accommodation available is for whole-time instruction, but it is the policy of the Ministry gradually to change it to half-time accommodation with alternative sessions for boys and girls, thus providing for a larger number of children without any unduly immediate increase in accommodation or staff."[150]

It is further understood that Egypt has confined her Compulsory Education to half-time attendance only.[151]

Turkey also has to "work on half-time system in order to cope with the influx of children".[152]

It has been shown that some countries have been forced to resort to the part-time system in some form or another in order to cope with the ever-increasing difficulty of accommodating more children in schools. India excels all these countries in her poverty and also continues to be educationally backward. Would it not be in her interest to follow their precedents and practices in this regard, with a view to accelerating the liquidation of mass illiteracy?

Denmark, Sweden and Norway which are mainly agricultural countries have developed systems of mass education from which there is much that India can learn with profit. An Indian educationist, Khan

---

149. *Overseas Education*, April 1933.

150. *Year Book of Education* (London), 1932, p. 986.

151. *Year Book of Education* (London), 1934, p. 142. The following information is given in the *Year Book of Education* (London), 1939, p. 746: "Half-day Schools:—In these schools the lessons are given on the same day to two groups, boys and girls separately. The half-day system was adopted for two main reasons:

(1) Economical, because the cost of educating all children would be three million pounds annually instead of six, and

(2) Social, so as to give the children the chance of working with their parents in the farms or the shops during half of the day."

In 1928, out of a total number of 2,80,000 pupils in primary or elementary schools, 1,67,000 were attending half-day schools. In 1938, the figures stood at 9,84,000 and 8,58,000 respectively. In Egypt, about 90 per cent of the pupils in primary or elementary schools are taught in schools for half the day only. Laws for compulsion were passed in 1933. The lower age-limit is 7.

152. *Year Book of Education* (London), 1932, p. 974.

Bahadur A. A. Mohomad Zakaullah Khan, M.A., who has visited Denmark, observes as follows: "The children's schools are part-time schools. The law provides that the schools must be open *during 41 weeks in the year.* In rural schools, pupils of every class must be taught 18 hours every week; these 18 hours a week are worked out in different schools according to local circumstances. The principle kept in view is that the farmers must not be deprived more than necessary of the help of their children. In some schools, the children attend the school for 3 hours a day for six days in the week, but much more common is the arrangement by which children attend the school for six hours every alternate day. Under this arrangement, one teacher can take two classes on alternate days." [153]

He recommends the adoption of the part-time system of education of Denmark in the Indian primary schools and says: "I would recommend the arrangement by which the children attend the school for six hours every alternate day. Under this system the number of scholars can be doubled without increasing the number of teachers." [154]

The following system obtains in Norway:

"Country Schools: Even the school year is considerably shorter than in towns, the junior division having only 12 weeks' schooling in the year, the senior division 14 weeks, which latter number, however, may be increased to 21 weeks. To this may be added 6 weeks' voluntary instruction, with a foreign language, if desired; . . . The ordinary short schooling of the country is usually spread over the year, the pupils attending school only every other day.

"In comparison with the 39 weeks' schooling in the town schools, the country schooling seems rather inadequate. But the fact is that the efficiency of the country schools is considered, broadly speaking, to be on the level with that of the town schools. This may be accounted for by the greater amount of energy the children are able to devote to their school work, when it is confined to three days of the week, the greater amount of time left for their preparation, and perhaps also by the greater maturity of country children who most of them take part in the working life of the farmer at an early age." [155]

The system in Iceland is as follows:

"There are 207 school districts. In 133, there is itinerant teaching each teacher covering from 2 to 4 centres with a minimum of eight to twelve weeks' teaching for each child. There are fixed schools in eight towns, 31 villages and 35 rural districts with a minimum school term

153. *The Rural System of Education in Denmark*, p. 13.
154. ibid., p. 34.
155. *Year Book of Education*, 1935, p. 880.

of six months in towns and villages and twelve weeks in rural schools."[156]

Sweden fulfilled her duty towards her people in the matter of mass education in a somewhat different way. In Sweden (1902), in many places, the school district was divided into two or more sections (Rota) and the school migrated from one to another dividing school year between them. Even in the ordinary schools a school is often sub-divided between different groups of children, different classes being taught at different periods of the year, or on alternate days of the week; so that in actual practice, many Swedish children are only under instruction for four months of the year.[157]

In Australia and New Zealand, the devices used to tackle the problem of small number of children available at each place are varied and interesting. There are travelling teachers, Saturday schools, Week-end schools, Home to Home schools, Part-time schools and Camp schools.[158]

The practices followed by some of the countries of the world enumerated above supply lessons for India which she should not fail to take to heart. India is a continent and the conditions prevailing in countries mentioned above are to be found in India in some part or another.

A peep into what has been done in India in respect of adoption of the Shift System or other modes of part-time instruction may be of interest. The earliest mention of some measure of part-time instruction is made in the 'Progress of Education in India' for 1907-12.[159]

It appears that somewhere between 1917 and 1922 experiments of half-time schools were made in some places. For, while the 'Progress of Education in India' for 1912-17 does not make any specific mention of such measures, the next issue for 1917-22 refers to 'half-time schools'. The report says: "The half-time system met with a certain success for a time in the Allahabad district, but this success is now attributed to the personal influence of its originator. With his transfer to another station it has fallen into desuetude." Attempts elsewhere have met with even less success. The Chairman of the District Board, Pilibhit, says: "Parents expressed their opinion of the value of the half-time system by simply withdrawing their boys." Belief in this experiment dies hard, and it is still being tried in the United Provinces and the Central Provinces. The Inspector of Schools, Berar, reports that "the scheme however is unpopular with the teachers, the parents and the children,

156. ibid., p. 163.
157. *Special Reports on Educational Subjects* (London), Vol. III, p. 100.
158. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1924*, pp. 15-16 and pp. 337-338.
159. Vol. I, p. 112.

and it is yet too early to gauge the result of the experiment as a means of economising staffs and funds or of increasing the number of pupils ".[160]

'The Progress of Education' for 1922-27 does not continue the thread of the U.P. and C.P. experiments mentioned in the previous report. One hardly knows what happened to those experiments. But this report makes mention of Bombay experiments of a similar nature: "In some districts in Bombay experiments have been made with the double shift system by which infants attend school at one session of $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours and the rest of the pupils at another session of three hours. It is however reported that the experiment has not been successful, both the parents and the teachers having opposed it, the former because the children are not sufficiently long at school and the latter because it means extra work." [161]

The Hartog Committee have observed on this measure (Shift System) as follows: "Both in Assam and in Bombay experiments have been made in the double shift system in which the school is divided by the teacher into two sections, each section only sitting for half the ordinary school day. Such a method enables the teacher to handle the infants and the more advanced pupils separately, thus improving the instruction given. We have been told that this expedient is proving a success in Assam, but that in Bombay it does not give satisfaction either to the parents or to the authorities." [162]

'The Progress of Education' for 1927-32 does not contain remarks on this system. The matter seems to have been considered quite insignificant to deserve any mention in the report.

So far as Bombay Province is concerned, the Shift System has had a chequered career. It passed through three definite stages as revealed by official opinion. The years 1912-22 witnessed several experiments with the system and it was found that it had "produced good results ".[163] It was further believed that though the idea was a sound one, it was not meeting with the approval of parents and teachers and the opinion was therefore expressed that it was more likely that the system would be successful under compulsory education.[164]

The Chandavarkar Committee on whose report the Bombay Primary Education Act of 1923 was based, made the following observation as regards the Shift System: "On the whole we are prepared to recommend that Local authorities who desire to introduce the 'Shift' system, by which half the pupils in the lower classes attend school in

160. Vol. I, pp. 120-21. 161. Vol. I, p. 133.
162. Report, p. 79. 163. D.P.I.'s Report for 1917-18, Vol. I, p. 16.
164. D.P.I.'s Report for 1920-21, Vol. I, p. 16.

the morning and other half in the afternoon, should be allowed to do so, but we consider that the experiment should be watched carefully." [165]

As a consequence of this recommendation provision was made under Section 7(3)(*d*) of the Primary Education Act of 1923 to allow Local Educational Authorities to introduce the Shift System after obtaining previous sanction of Government.

During the period 1923-28, the official opinion was that although the system was unpopular with parents and teachers it had much to commend itself in the case of one-teacher schools and if the co-operation of the teachers could be secured by the payment of adequate extra remuneration, considerable success might be achieved.[166]

The year 1929, which coincided with the change in the Head of the Educational Department, witnessed a complete change in the outlook on the problem as can be seen from the following extract from the Annual Report for 1928-29: "Though the system is neither popular nor educationally commendable it is being tried in different quarters as a measure of economy, especially where compulsion is being introduced." [167]

The change in the outlook began to be reflected in the reports for the successive years and in his Report for 1932-33, the Director went so far as to declare that the system was not sound and the sooner it was abandoned the better.[168]

In view of such condemnation by the highest educational official it is no wonder that the system did not make any headway during this period. But although it did not thrive it continued to linger, because owing to diminishing financial help by Government and the increasing number of children attending schools, some Local Educational Authorities could not but allow the system to continue.

With the advent of a popular Government in the year 1937 things have taken a dramatic turn in Bombay so far as official outlook on the Shift System is concerned. In their eagerness for expansion of mass education Government have not only restored the cuts in grants made to Local Educational Authorities but have definitely advised them to give a fair trial to the Shift System and other forms of part-time instruction in order to accelerate progress.

The views recently expressed on the Shift System in different parts of India may now be briefly considered.

The Burma Education Reorganization Committee recommend: "Local Education Authorities should be permitted to prepare for sanction

165. Report, p. 48.
166. Report for 1927-28, Vol. I, p. 60.
167. Report, Vol. I, p. 40.
168. Report, Vol. I, p. 42.

by the competent education authority, schemes of instruction by a shift system when such organization is necessitated by local conditions and shortage of staff."[169]

The D.P.I. of Assam says : "Another cause, viz. inconvenient hours of attendance for those children who are required to help their parents at home or in the field, can be easily remedied by arranging morning and night schools, and also by double shift sitting of classes."[170]

The Vocational Training Committee of the Bombay Government recommend "that Local Authorities and Managements of approved schools be permitted, if they so desire, to introduce the Shift System and other forms of part-time instruction in their schools with a view to accelerating the spread of education amongst the masses."[171]

The Education Survey Committee of Cochin (1934) observe: "We do not think that a small child in the first two or three classes requires instruction for full five hours, and that . . . it will be desirable to extend the system to all Lower elementary schools, such schools working only for 2½ hours a day."[172]

In this connection the D.P.I., Mysore, in his Annual Report for 1933-34, says: "The other method which has been tried and given up, but which may have to be tried again, is the Shift System. Instead of two sessions each day, children of any one class are at school only either in the morning or in the afternoon. This system has been tried in Ceylon and is said to have been beneficial." [173]

In Hyderabad State, they have recently introduced the Shift System on a wide scale. One of the reasons for its adoption is that it "will to a certain extent remove the frequent complaint of the parents in rural areas that the present school hours do not give their children an opportunity of helping them in their occupations. The boys will now have half-a-day set free for such work".[174]

The Rev. Milton G. Koult observes: "The solution that I would offer for this problem (teaching very large numbers) is to make the present staff and permanent equipment do double duty. If a prosperous country like the United States has had to resort to the double shift system, I think it is time that in India we think also along the same lines." [175]

From the above account of what is being done in India today about the Shift System and of what is being said about its utility, it will be seen that its introduction in India is not only desirable but extremely

169. Report, pp. 21-22.
170. Report for 1927-32, p. 125.
171. Report, p. 26.
172. Report, p. 20.
173. Report, p. 85.
174. *Hyderabad Teacher* (Oct.-Dec. 1938), p. 43.
175. *Educational Review*, May 1937.

necessary. The question is how to make use of it on a large scale. Hitherto most of the experiments were sporadic which only succeeded where they were introduced in the whole area under a local educational authority. This is the experience not only in India but even in foreign countries. There must not be exceptions, because they give rise to comparisons and even to suspicion about the motives of those who initiate the change. When, however, certain measures are made voluntary only, people fail to see the good in them and try picking holes. In the field of education the difficulties are still greater. Most of the measures calculated to bring about good results in mass education, if enforced, do not yield results for a long time. That is why all over the world compulsion has to be introduced in mass education. If then the State is convinced that a particular measure will lead to good results in mass education, it must not leave the thing to the sweet will of the people.

Opposition to a system of part-time instruction in its various forms centres round its probable effects on 'efficiency'. Efficiency, however, is a relative term, and must needs bear relationship to the social and economic background of a country. Apart from this, because of territorial, financial and other considerations, many countries of the world have taken recourse to the part-time system of teaching. The system has become well-nigh universal and it would almost look impertinent for a poor country like India to cavil at it.

In Mass Education in India the question of quality *versus* quantity has been discussed in great detail by the writer where it has been shown that owing to the official predilection in favour of quality, quantity has been ruthlessly sacrificed. An effective rejoinder to the official view is supplied by the following extract from an Editorial in the *Times of India*: "If democracy in India is to be a success, the main burden of educational effort must be directed to breaking down the illiteracy of the masses. Can this be done? Already expenditure on education is as much as—if not more than—the country can afford; it is impossible to contemplate any great additional capital outlay or recurrent increases in provincial educational budgets. If the effort is to be made it will have to be for the most part within the present financial order of things. The main problem is the spread of primary education. Official initiative is inevitably necessary, for the uneducated will not demand instruction. Faced by a palpable inability to find more funds for this purpose, Government have no other obvious alternative but to compromise quality for the sake of quantity. That is an extremely serious suggestion to make, as we are fully aware. It cuts at the very root of official educational effort carried on arduously in the present century. Yet hard though it is, would it not be in the interest of the country to face the issue?

"The choice is apparently between the efficient instruction of the few and the literacy of the many. By which method is general advance most likely to be expedited? Appreciation of education is itself a consequence of education, and the experience of other countries does seem to show that speedy progress was most marked where mass effort was made. In countries like England or even Japan—if historical comparison is made when their educational expansion was in vogue—it is found that numbers were the main consideration and that, with large classes and relays of classes, some measure of instruction was imparted by one teacher to large numbers. In countries with large territorial areas a teacher might be in charge of several centres between which his activities were divided. Such methods demand a syllabus on modest and straightforward lines, and teachers of character and ability. So far as India is concerned this would mean resiling to some extent from our present policy. It is a serious step to take, but how else is the darkness to be lightened? To get at all the children, the available provision of primary education requires to be quadrupled or more. The rate of increase in literacy as a result of consistent and successful attempts to reduce stagnation and wastage has undoubtedly improved, and at the present speed the next generation will show far better figures of advance than the last.

"Yet even that measure of improvement will be minute compared with the whole. It would seem almost beyond our resources to make any further material attack on illiteracy if present standards of efficiency are maintained. The key to advance, the success of a sustained campaign for village and rural uplift, the very fate of a democratically constituted India, are vitally dependent on the extension of mass education. Must we not, therefore, most seriously consider whether it would be wiser in the long run to modify quality in a wider interest and initiate a concerted drive on the dangerous apathy which widespread ignorance promotes?" [176]

XV. COMPULSION AND EXPANSION

Since the day the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale introduced into the Central Legislature a bill for making primary education compulsory, the idea of compulsion has been in the forefront and, according to some, it is a sovereign remedy for attaining mass literacy. But this view is only partially correct. Compulsion can force a child to attend a school and keep him there till the period of compulsion is over. But the attainment of literacy, which is one of the most important aims of compulsory education, cannot be guaranteed even if the child stays in the school for, say, four years. It is well known that several pupils

176. *Times of India*, 17th November 1936.

remain in the first two classes for 4 or 5 years. Compulsion with such stagnation will be of small use and the money spent will not yield a full return in terms of literates. Before applying compulsion, therefore, the first essential is that the internal organization of schooling should be so adjusted as to minimise retardation by non-promotion of pupils. On pages 68-73* this question has been discussed at length. Unless, therefore, proper steps are taken in this direction, it would not be advisable for the State to resort to compulsion.

Although compulsion is by far the most effective remedy for securing rapid increase in literacy, it is, at the same time, a very expensive one. Experience shows that, even when compulsion is introduced, a certain percentage of children of the compulsory age will not attend school, although provision has to be made on the supposition that all will come. Thus, from a purely financial point of view, there will be certain amount of waste of money. This is illustrated by the following statistics[177] of England from the year 1871, the first year when the element of compulsion was introduced, to 1898, when compulsion was fully effective.

Year	Number for whom accommodation was provided (in lakhs)	Number of students on the Registers (in lakhs)	Average attendance (in lakhs)
1871 ..	20 (100)	16 (90)	12 (60)
1881 ..	44 (100)	40 (90)	29 (66)
1896 ..	59 (100)	53 (90)	43 (70)

N.B.—Figures in brackets denote percentage.

It will be seen from the above table that in England the introduction of compulsion entailed large waste which amounted to about 10 per cent if the number of students on the Registers are considered, and to about 30 to 40 per cent if the average attendance is taken into account. It is important to note also that this had continued even after a quarter of a century of compulsion. When a nation seriously launches compulsion it must of necessity provide for a larger number of pupils than are likely to attend immediately; and further, it must be prepared to see a good proportion of the money wasted. For the nation has to make its plan on the hope that the people will realise the importance of

* *Literacy in India*, 1939.
177. Extracted from Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Vol. I, p. 48.

educating their children. A number of places have to be reserved all the year round. This is indeed a great sacrifice, but it has to be made if universal education is to be achieved. India in its poverty is naturally impatient of wastage of any sort. The wastage caused by early leaving of children could, to a great extent, be stopped by compulsion; but the other type of financial wastage—due to the necessity of providing more accommodation than is likely to be utilized—seems to be unavoidable as is shown by the example of England.

It has been the practice in some parts of India as also in some other countries to promulgate laws of compulsion without providing for all the children of the compulsory age-group. This really is not compulsion. It is a type of self-deception which may ultimately have harmful reactions owing to the loose conception of compulsion and a consequent tendency to avoid effective compulsion even when the State has the wherewithal to have it.

According to the existing financial arrangements between Government and local educational authorities, the Government grant for areas where compulsion is introduced is based on the number of pupils on the rolls and not on the number for which the local educational authority has to make provision. It has been pointed out already that in any scheme of compulsion there is a wide difference between the number of pupils provided for and the number on the rolls; and the Government grant in all justice should be based on the former number.

A new feature of compulsion is coming into prominence in India particularly in Madras where provision has been made for a modified form of compulsion. Its main object is "to secure that once a child has entered a school, it must remain there until the limits of the compulsory age and may not discontinue attending school".[178] Laudable though the experiment is it should be remembered that even this modified form of compulsion involves considerable financial responsibility and perhaps much waste of money unless simultaneous efforts are made to prevent stagnation.

Whatever its form, compulsion in education is a costly remedy. And unless a nation is prepared to set aside the necessary finances, it is better to rely upon expansion through other methods. It should also be noted here that compulsion is a double-edged weapon and hasty measures to introduce compulsion may do more harm than good; they might divert funds for compulsion when perhaps the same, if used more economically, would bring better results without compulsion.

---

178. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 48.

XVI. THE PROBLEM OF THE CORRICULUM

Some broad principles regarding the curricula for primary schools may be laid down. First of all, school curricula in general have been evolved not as a result of conscious thought, but mainly on the basis of the existing practices and age-long traditions. This is clearly shown by the following observation of Mr. Kandel: "The making of curricula and courses of study has been too much dominated by conventions and traditions to the neglect of the demands of everyday life. The curricula have grown by the accretion of subjects and subject-matter without any careful synthesis or interpretation. Courses of studies have been imitated and copied while the influence of text-books has been detrimental to freedom and to local adoption." [179]

Curricula are man-made things and like all other mundane affairs are liable to change. Their vitality lies in flexibility so as to meet changing conditions and new demands. It is not unusual to find teachers and even those who supervise their work being reluctant to go beyond or below the prescribed curricula. In India one comes across primary school curricula which have hardly changed over a period of a quarter of a century. It is no wonder that the teaching profession as a whole should attribute immutability to such curricula. And if the curricula are at all changed, some of the older members of the profession look upon the changes as inroads to be steadily resisted with the zeal of martyrs. This conservative attitude is well illustrated by the story of an old American teacher who was blamed for teaching the cuberoot to a class from whose syllabus the teaching of the cube-root was deleted. The reply of the teacher was: "These children shall not be deprived of cube-root so long as I can stand before them as their teacher." [180]

Not only should curricula be mainly based on the conditions of life of the people in each locality, but it is of the utmost importance that they should be so framed that the contents prescribed may easily be finished by a class within the time that the teacher can conveniently give to it. The curricula should again have direct relation to the qualification and capacity of the teacher. If these salutary principles are followed, the number of failures in Indian schools will appreciably go down.

The curricula for primary schools should grow richer and richer as the level of the community rises in knowledge and in the appreciation of its acquisition. Hence, it is necessary that too much should not be attempted where too much is neither needed nor appreciated. This is especially so in the backward tracts of the country and in the early years

---

179. *Comparative Education*, p. 504.
180. *The New Era*, March 1932, p. 74.

of schooling. The crushing weight and the deadening pressure of the task make children dull and listless.

In this connection it would be of interest to quote from the speech of Mr. Satyendra Nath Roy, I.C.S., at the 15th All-Bengal Teachers' Conference held at Comilla. He said: "The boys in the lower forms are taught too many things in our country. Boys from 8 to 12 in our schools know much more than the boys of the same age in Europe. But the crushing weight of the books and the deadening pressure of the task tend to make the intellect of our boys dull from 12 onwards and the result is that after 12, boys in Europe acquire greater and more useful knowledge than boys of the same age in our country. Boys are bound to grow dull if undue pressure of study is put on them in the early years."[181]

If these principles are observed in framing curricula, it does not matter whether they consist of the three R's only or of many other subjects.

XVII. LITERACY AND EDUCATION

There is of late a great awakening in India in favour of promoting mass literacy. Some people, however, seem to be opposed to this so-called concentration on literacy as they fear that as a result of this new awakening education will be sacrificed. According to them what is required in India is education; and literacy is not education. In fact, 'literacy' *versus* 'education' is only another garb for 'quality' *versus* 'quantity'.

According to the advocates of this school of thought, education is quite different from literacy—acquisition of the skill to read and write. No one, not even the greatest advocate of literacy, will contend that the acquisition of literacy is identical with the acquisition of education; but even the most zealous advocates of education must admit that acquisition of literacy is the first essential step in the acquisition of education. It is, therefore, difficult to understand why the advocates of education should oppose the progress of literacy. They will certainly not deny the great truth that whatever be our talk about education, the ability to read and write is at its very root. Education in its modern sense is organically connected with the ability to read and write and no amount of wordy warfare can dislodge literacy from its high pedestal. In fact, broadly speaking literacy is the foundation on which the structure of education is mainly built. The advocates of literacy, it should be remembered, do not want to deny the right of a citizen to have more than what is implied in the term 'literacy'. What they

181. *Educational India*, May-June 1936, p. 426.

demand is to have first things first. In the words of the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale: "Primary purpose of mass education is to banish illiteracy from the land. The quality of education is a matter of importance that comes only after illiteracy has been banished." [182]

If one looks at the history of the development of mass education in all the countries of the world, there is ample evidence to show that those who emphasize the acquisition of literacy as the most important function of primary education are not doing anything new. They are simply following the royal road to education.

The supreme importance of the acquisition of literacy as one of the aims of primary education in India has been duly emphasized by those who have had occasion to formulate the 'aims' of primary education in India. They have fixed the acquisition of literacy as their first objective. This emphasis on literacy has led some to say: "A school (in India) is designed to confer literacy upon those who undertake the courses provided." [183] The point has been put in a nutshell in the Report of the D.P.I., Bombay, for 1922-27: "The policy has been to concentrate on essentials and to use the money available to teach the 3 R's to as many boys and girls as possible. The policy may be open to criticism from the purely educational point of view. I feel however that it is necessary to take a broader view. The first essential for anything in the nature of democratic government in India is a literate electorate. The cultivators are the backbone of the country and it is right that they should have a voice in the government, but they should at least be literate, if they are to take an intelligent interest in political questions." [184]

This undoubtedly sound view of mass education appears to have undergone considerable change in recent years in Bombay. This changed view is best exemplified by the inclusion in the newly drafted syllabus for Primary Training Colleges of an item called "Meaning of Mass Education—Difference between education and literacy—scope and limitations of mere literacy—object of education". In the absence of further details it is not clear as to what is meant by "limitations of mere literacy". It is, however, clear that the Department of Education in Bombay expects the lecturers in their training colleges to warn the would-be teachers not to concentrate on "mere literacy" for fear of neglecting education. They would have literacy and education or nothing at all.

Such an item of study in any Training College Course has no parallel in any part of the world. In a land plunged in illiteracy, it

---

182. *Gokhale's Speeches* (Natesan & Co., 2nd Edition), p. 772.
183. Report on Primary Education in U.P.—R. S. Weir, p. 11.
184. Report, Vol. I, p. 94.

is most unwise to prescribe the study of "limitations of mere literacy" for budding teachers under training. It is like lecturing on over-feeding to a population dying of starvation. The teaching of such a subject will obviously result in counteracting private and State efforts in combating illiteracy by prejudicing the minds of the teachers—or, at least, of some of them. Such a teaching in the name of training is bound to impede the path of progress of literacy and indirectly the extension of mass education itself.

The following account of how the co-operation of the teachers under training is considered essential in fighting against illiteracy would be instructive: "When they undertook to weed out illiteracy in the State of Mississippi one of the things they did was to ask the teachers in their examination how to rid the State of adult illiteracy. The idea was that they should think about illiteracy and consider the plans for removing it." [185]

XVIII. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

In a country like India where the general percentage of literacy is only 8, the necessity of adult education for the promotion of literacy requires no special pleading or justification. For, as Sir George Anderson has observed: "In present-day conditions, failure to promote education for adults must inevitably result in failure to remove illiteracy." [186]

Such statistics as are available (and they are not very reliable either) show that there were about 3½ lakhs of adults under instruction in the whole of India in 1927 and their number dwindled in 1932 to 1½ lakhs. The State Departments of Education appear to have been completely oblivious of the problem of adult education prior to the twenties of the present century; and it is only thereafter that one sees a mention of the topic in the Annual and Quinquennial Reports.

It is very heartening, however, to see that with the advent of autonomy in Provincial Governments a wave of enthusiasm for the spread of literacy among the adults should pass over the country. For the first time in the history of education in India, Provincial Governments are showing keen interest in this work. In the Province of Bombay, the Government have appointed an Adult Education Board for starting, consolidating and aiding adult education and have also earmarked funds for the purpose.

'Adults' and 'Adult Education' have been defined by the Adult Education Committee appointed by the Bombay Government as follows:

---

185. Report of the World Education Conference at Edinburgh (1925), Vol. II, p. 639.

186. *Progress of Education in India, 1927-32*, p. 259.

"We mean by 'Adult' (in its relation to Adult Education) all those above the age of 14, whose formal education either has not started or has ended; and by 'Adult Education' we mean (1) the education of the illiterate at all stages; and (2) the further education of literates at any stage and in any direction. The latter type of education may be life-long and is not primarily directed to material ends. We are dividing Adult Education work into two parts: (1) that which centres round literacy, including the preparatory ground-work and the subsequent follow-up work, both in rural and urban areas; and (2) Adult Education as it is commonly understood in the West—that education which the adult seeks for himself or herself in the civilized community for supplementing an imperfect education and for extending and enriching the possibilities of life."[187]

So far as India is concerned adult education must for the present be mainly confined to the spread of literacy. When that object is achieved, the other forms of adult education as practised in advanced countries of the world could as well claim the attention of the State and of the people. This does not, however, mean that other forms of adult education should be altogether ignored. It is desirable in the wider interests of the country to encourage these activities wherever they are in operation so that when time is ripe for their widespread adoption, the country may not begin them as entirely fresh activities.

The problem of adult education in India resolves itself into two types: (1) of semi-literates and (2) of illiterates. Semi-literates are those above the age of 14 who have been in school for some time, but who have left school before attaining literacy.

The approximate number of such semi-literates for the Bombay Presidency (including Sind) during the decade 1922-31 may here be estimated:

Class	Number on Roll 1922–31 (in lakhs)	Number promoted to the higher class (in lakhs)
1st year ..	33.5	14.8
2nd year ..	17.2	10.2
3rd year ..	14.6	8.3

In order to eliminate the number of 'repeaters', only the number of promoted pupils may here be considered. During the decade, 14.8 lakhs of pupils completed the 1st year class, and 8.3 lakhs, the 3rd year class. Roughly speaking, during the decade if the schools sent out 8 lakhs of literates, they sent out 6 lakhs of semi-literates, all of

187. Report (1938), p. 1.

whom had spent not less than one year in school, and further, all of whom had stood the most difficult ordeal of completing the 1st year class. Out of these 6 lakhs of semi-literates nearly 2 lakhs represent those who have completed the 2nd year class and therefore can be said to be on the verge of attaining literacy. They require only a little more instruction to acquire literacy.

Calculating similar figures for British India (including Burma), it is found that roughly two crores of pupils left schools after completing the 1st year class of whom nearly 70 lakhs completed the 3rd year class. This means that more than a crore of persons are semi-literates who can, with a little more effort, be made literates. And this number is only for the decade 1922-31; if similar number for subsequent years be taken into account the total number of semi-literates will probably reach three crores. These figures bring out in clear relief the vast potentialities of a campaign against illiteracy through the further instruction of semi-literates. It should be noted here that the vast number of pupils who leave schools without completing the 1st year class has not been taken into account. The rendering of these semi-literates into literates will constitute a most powerful lever for raising the percentage of literacy in India at a much smaller cost.

Researches into the correlation between age and learning ability show a curve ascending sharply from the age of 14 to 22 and descending gradually thereafter. The youths of a country in the age-group 15 to 25, whether illiterates or semi-literates, constitute the most strategic group in the present generation from the point of view of attacking illiteracy. The semi-literates will be rendered literate with ease; while the illiterates will take longer time. It is, therefore, in the interest of the country as a whole that the first attack in the campaign against mass illiteracy should be directed at the semi-literates of the age-group 15 to 25.

Although the instruction of those who are in the age-group 15 to 25 is conducive of the best results, those in higher age-groups also respond to instruction often more quickly than school children. Dr. E. L. Thorndike, as a result of careful experiment, observes: "A man or a woman under 50 should seldom be discouraged from trying to learn. To the lesser degree, this is true after 50 years." [188] Adults in America were taught reading, writing and arithmetic for only one month and the results scientifically measured. The work done by the intermediate group was equal to what average elementary pupils do in 7.5 months and the advanced group's work was equal to 9.5 months of work by children.

188. *Better Village Schools*—Mason Alcott, p. 144.

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart of Kentucky (U.S.A.) observes as follows with regard to the ease with which illiterates learn to read and write and to acquire the rudiments of an elementary education: "In our experience we find that a man or woman can learn to make their signature in one evening, to write a legible letter in ten weeks, and some of them in one week's time. They can learn to read an ordinary elementary reader in six weeks' time, and they acquire the minimum essentials of history, geography and civics in six weeks' course. Some of them think that it is something which comes about in a miraculous way, as manna from heaven."[189]

The great advantage of instructing grown-up children and young adults from the point of view of time and money in carrying on a nation-wide campaign against mass illiteracy, has been fully realised by the Chinese National Government. This realization has been quickly translated into a measure which seeks to make compulsory attendance in a short-term elementary school for a year for grown-up children and young adults, between the ages of 10 and 16, who have no opportunity of schooling.[190]

India can take a lesson from China in fighting illiteracy through adult education. Dr. Ping Ling, in his address[191] at the World Education Conference held at Edinburgh in 1925, gave a very instructive account of the campaign against illiteracy that was being carried on in China through adult education.

Dr. Ling referred to the difficulties of the Chinese language which for a decent mastery in reading and writing required at least a ten years' study. The spoken language was different from the written language. The first thing that was accomplished was to substitute the spoken language for the written language and to make it current in books, magazines and newspapers. Even after this, it required at least 4 or 5 years for a person to read and write the spoken language. With a view to solving this difficulty the spoken language was reduced to 1,000 characters, and although some improvement on the selection of these 1,000 characters was bound to take place, the system had been working very well. Dr. Ling further observed: "Now, you might ask how much time does it take for a person to master the thousand characters, because a thousand characters means a thousand different kinds of writing. Each stroke must be placed in its proper place, not as in the English language, A, B, C, D, and so on, where only you have two dozen characters to master. We have a thousand to master, and each one has its own meaning, so that it is very hard for the people

189. Report of the World Education Conference at Edinburgh (1925), Vol. II, p. 638.

190. *The China Year Book, 1935*, p. 279.

191. The address is printed on pp. 639 to 647 of Vol. II of the Report of the Conference.

to master them. But, we find that that is not so with the Chinese youth. We take them for one hour a day during the six week-days, and we can get an intelligent youth to master those thousand characters in four months. And not only it is so in the case of youths but we also find that it is possible in the case of people of advanced age, so that it is a true saying that one is never too old to learn. We have a lady of sixty-seven who learned to read and write in four months, and she got a diploma for that."

Dr. Ling's account of propaganda methods of adult education is of interest: "The next question is how to reach the great mass of people who cannot read or write. . . . In order to reach every illiterate in any locality one must have an organization. We must stir up the people in the cities and in the villages to get them interested in the subject. We first of all start a campaign in the city, getting the magistrate or mayor of the city interested in the subject, and we make him feel it his duty to wipe out this illiteracy. Secondly, we get the school teachers to help us, volunteers who must serve after school hours to teach these illiterates, say, one hour a day, and we get the High School students to work after school hours in teaching those illiterates for an hour a day during six days of the week. We also have open-air schools during the summer. In some cases we have classes of 200, 400 or 500 pupils, and two or three teachers can manage them very well in the evenings in the open-air places.

"Then we have what we call 'home schools'. A certain family, say, employs a number of maids or servants, as is very common in Chinese families, we make the owner of the house more or less responsible for them, just as if you employed a man servant or maid who could not read or write and it was your duty to see to it that they were able to read and write within four months. The master of the house is made responsible for educating his servants. Also we have a travelling teacher who goes around to collect those servants from the different houses at certain hours of the day, from four to five or three to four. This travelling teacher after school hours will go and collect them in a certain family or a certain place by arrangement, and then she will begin to teach a class of 20 or 30, and no teacher is allowed to quit his job until he has finished it.

"Now, it is a strenuous task to keep at it for four months for six days a week. Then we have certain stations in the city where we place certain students or teachers for the coolies whose work is not business, they do not work in the factories or anywhere else, but they run the streets, and therefore they do not stay in one place. At each street corner you can find our student there for anyone to ask questions based on those thousand characters. Any coolie, if he has five minutes to

spare, can go there and ask him questions and he will be taught. We have one thousand and one ways of reaching the illiterates.

"Then we have a system of graduating these students; a diploma is a kind of honour to them, and a kind of certificate for their employment in the future. And we say to the families, 'You should not employ illiterates in your families. If you already employ them you must make them able to read and write'. Thus we bring pressure on the illiterates on the one hand by saying 'You must learn if you want to ensure your employment in the future', and, on the other hand, we say to the employers, 'You must make your employees able to read and write if you want social support'.

"After the youth has finished his four months' schooling we have continuation schools for other four months. In these continuation schools we teach them geography, civics, history, hygiene, and so on, and these little text-books are based on these thousand characters. If any character is employed in those text-books which is not in the thousand characters they are enumerated, so that you have no difficulty in reading. Usually you find the young people graduate from the first primary school and then go to the continuation schools. For those who cannot go to the continuation schools we have reading clubs, and some of the ladies in the city or some of the school teachers in the city will act as the ladies of the reading clubs and help those youths who want to read books from the public library. They can go there and read, and if they cannot understand there is always someone in the reading-room who can explain to them. This is what we are doing in China. So far we have granted two million diplomas in two years."

This rather lengthy account of the campaign against illiteracy through adult education in China has been given because to us, who have yet to build up proper methods and practices in adult education, it would be most illuminating. China is a nation which has much in common with us. The difference in the percentage of literacy is, however, too great to be ignored. China has more than 20 per cent of its population already literate; while India has not yet even 10 per cent literates. China is far ahead of us in literacy and the efforts that India has to make therefore be more vigorous and extensive.

When Dr. Ling spoke of the Chinese Adult Education Movement, the work as described was mainly carried on by the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education. It was more or less a private association. In 1929, however, the National Government of China took the problem in hand and the Ministry of Education issued a set of regulations governing the development of the adult school, "thereby giving the educators in adult schools a basis upon which to organise their efforts".[192]

192. *The China Year Book, 1935-36,* p. 487.

The following are some of the important points in the Chinese Government regulations. The adult schools are meant for pupils between the ages of 16 and 50. Adult schools whether public or private are subject to the supervision of the District or the City Educational Authorities. These authorities may establish according to local needs adult schools in which to try new methods. Adult schools are free and open to all, where books and stationery are provided free of charge. The instruction is to cover at least three months, with a weekly schedule of at least 12 hours. The classes are preferably held in the evenings and on holidays. Evening schools may be established by private persons or groups of persons in shops, factories or clubs.

Although the Chinese Adult Education Movement originated with the object of giving training in reading and writing and elementary knowledge of citizenship, it has now placed before it a broader objective especially while tackling the problem in villages.

" Successful as this work has been in large cities, it is confronted with serious difficulties in rural communities. And in rural communities over 80 per cent of the Chinese population live. There not only do they live in thinly scattered condition which renders mass teaching difficult, but they also live under very severe economic pressure which makes the teaching of reading and writing seem of little use. There the teaching of the use of better farming implements, of modern agricultural methods, of village self-government, of how to organise co-operative societies, etc. will command much greater following. It is this which leads the workers in adult education to strike a new line." [193]

In China the Adult Education Movement began in 1920. The rapid progress of adult education in China is seen from the fact that in 1934 there were about 40,000 adult schools conducted at a cost of about 40 lakhs Chinese dollars. The League of Nations' Commission on the Reorganisation of Education in China have paid a glowing tribute to the work of adult education in China. They say: " Adult Education is one of the most satisfactory features of education in China . . . it bulks much larger in the educational system as a whole, and its budget is proportionately far bigger than in other countries." [194]

China has realised to the fullest the supreme importance of adult education as no other educationally backward Asiatic country has done. She appears to believe that in the present circumstances it is only with the assistance of adult schools that literacy can be made universal.

The place of adult education in the system of mass education in a country where illiteracy is very high can never be over-estimated. In fact for some time to come it must occupy a place in the system on a

193. *The China Year Book, 1935,* p. 286. 194. Report, p. 188.

par with the education of the children. The task is, however, so colossal that nothing short of a whirlwind campaign can give encouraging results. For this, therefore, Government with its administrative machinery, private agencies of all sorts and the public-spirited men and women from all ranks of the community will have to take an intensely active part in one huge effort of a sustained campaign against illiteracy through adult education.

A child requires on an average about four years to become literate through school education; but an adult, if properly subjected to instruction, can be made literate in less than a year. From the point of view of expenditure also it can be safely said that while a boy under school instruction in British India costs Rs. 9 per year, an adult under instruction for a year will hardly require half the amount. The schooling of a boy for four years requires Rs. 36, while an adult requires only Rs. 4; for a year's effective instruction for the acquisition of literacy suffices in his case. One may, therefore, say that the increase of literacy through adult instruction is four times quicker from the time element and nine times paying from the financial point of view. It is only by such quick and cheap agency that a poor country like India can liquidate illiteracy in a reasonable period of time.

Adult Education has never been attempted in India on a large scale and even the small efforts made so far have not been successful. The reasons for this apathy and failure may be several. The main reason, however, is that the movement has been till now given a subordinate place in our efforts in mass education. Adult education has had practically no place in the Government system of education. Whatever work was or is being done is carried on by private agencies and it is doubtful whether they ever received any substantial help from Provincial Revenues. No wonder, therefore, that such labour of love unguided and unaided by the State should fail to produce measurable results. The need for the movement, therefore, is that the State should immediately recognise the supreme importance of adult education in the educational system of the country, and, without any delay, incorporate it in the system setting up organizations for its proper control, guidance and aid. Any organised effort of a permanent character has to be reduced to a State-guided system and adult education must be so reduced, with all its concomitant advantages of the pooling of experience, precedents and practices.

The initiative in this respect must come from the State which should set up organizations and promulgate rules and regulations for guiding and aiding all efforts in adult education as it has been doing in the case of primary education. An excellent example in this respect is supplied by the National Government of China. Research and experiment in methods of adult education is the primary duty of the

State. The State may make use of private agencies for this purpose if that is possible. Direction, supervision and aid are the three main functions of the State in respect of adult education and these functions cannot be efficiently discharged by half-hearted measures. The Staff employed for this work must be competent and adequately paid. Promulgation of adult education on a nation-wide scale is not possible unless the State and semi-State bodies like Municipalities and District Boards, which are at present responsible for conducting and aiding primary education, are made to take up that work as their everyday routine work just like that of primary education. Then alone will the system of adult education thrive.

Fortunately, adult education work is still associated in the public mind with ideas of charity and benevolence. Employers of labour, social workers and philanthropists regard adult education as deserving of help and support. Although, therefore, the system of adult education must be the primary responsibility of the State, in assuming this enormous responsibility the State should not fail to take into account the public sentiment and thereby relieve itself of a part of the burden.

An important aspect of adult education is the publication by the State of suitable literature for the instruction of the illiterates and for the continuation of the education of the adults who are made literates. The need for such literature is most urgent, if the reclaiming of the semi-literates into the fold of literates, as also the making of illiterate adults into literates, is to be real and effective. There is hardly any literature at present available in the country which could, with profit, be placed in the hands of adults who have just attained literacy through adult instruction. In fact, this is the crux of the problem of adult education. What use is it to teach the adults to read if no suitable literature is made available to them as soon as they are literates? The production of such literature must go hand in hand with the spread of adult education. Otherwise, the money and energy spent over the instruction of the adults will be wasted. Out of every rupee that the State and the community may be able to set aside for the promotion of adult education, at least four annas must be invested in the production of literature of all sorts that will interest the newly produced literates. Again, the books so published must be cheap. For, many of the newly produced adult literates may not be able or even willing to buy them. In such cases the books will have to be supplied to them free till they are able to cultivate and appreciate the reading habit. It is indeed a part of the instruction of the adults to see to it that they continue to read. As the Adult Education Movement gathers strength and as the adults cultivate the habit of reading, the pressure on the funds for the production of such literature will diminish. For, it is certain that the time will come, sooner or later, when the adults will spend as willingly on books as they do now on their tobacco or tea. But in the

beginning the expenditure on the production of suitable literature must be undertaken by organizations State-managed or State-aided. It will not do to entrust the work to unaided or unguided private agencies.

While the need of producing suitable literature is undoubted, its production is no easy task. In the first place very little such literature is at present extant and those entrusted with its production will, therefore, have little guidance. Moreover, it should be remembered that it has to cater to the needs of the lower strata of society and as such it must be related to the sentiments, feelings, desires and aspirations of their daily life and needs. The task becomes all the more difficult when it is remembered that owing to the great gulf which separates the masses from the classes, and the villagers from the city-dwellers, it will be difficult for authors writing for one group to interpret truly the needs of the other. Whatever the difficulties, the production of such literature is so essential to the progress of adult education, that the State must stint no effort or expense to commandeer the best brains in the country in order that suitable literature may be produced.

In this connection the following extract relating to the Dutch East Indies may be of interest: "Connected with the continuation schools are the popular libraries which contain books not only for children but for adults. . . . The books are supplied by the Government Bureau of Popular Literature. . . . These libraries are regarded as an essential element of the whole educational system. They are enjoying a growing popularity. From a most modest beginning in 1908 the Bureau of Popular Literature has developed into a great institution which works miracles with a moderate budget."

It is worthy of note that in the Dutch East Indies the Dutch rulers started the new system of primary schools and the Government Bureau of Popular Literature simultaneously, the latter supplementing the former in a most effective manner.

Another aspect of the question of adult education is the teaching staff to be employed. For obvious reasons such staff will have to be part-time only. It would be neither feasible nor desirable to recruit rank outsiders for such work. Undoubtedly, therefore, the primary agency for this would be that great body of active workers in the cause of education, viz. the teachers. It would, however, be putting too great a premium on their generosity and desire of service to call upon the teachers to do this work without any extra remuneration.

Assuming that teachers are to be called upon to shoulder this responsibility, it must be remembered that not all of them can be entrusted with the work and that a conscious selection would be desirable and necessary. Certain mental equipment is necessary for a successful teacher of adults.

The teachers cannot, however, proceed straight to teach the adults on the same lines as they teach the school children. There is a world of difference between the approaches to the two kinds of teachings. The training of teachers in this new work is a task which can best be done while the teachers are under training. In future it will form an important part of the work of the training colleges. In the meantime, some sort of arrangement will have to be made to give some directions to the teachers who will take up the new work.

Along with the teaching profession, it will be desirable and necessary to press into the service of the new movement, men and women who may not be teachers and yet are fitted to do the work of teaching the illiterate adults. The system should be sufficiently elastic so as to offer scope for work to such individuals. The services rendered by such persons will invigorate the movement bringing in a new spirit which will help to counteract the dead-weight of routine which is unavoidable in any system.

Assuming that the need of adult education is realised by the State and the necessary facilities provided, will the masses respond to the call? Will they attend the adult schools regularly during the minimum time required for the acquisition of literacy? Here there is no previous experience to guide us, because, as explained already, no systematic efforts have been made so far in the field of adult education. As regards the question of regularity of attendance on the part of the adults or even of their willingness to take the advantage of the facilities given to them, its solution necessarily lies in creating an atmosphere which is conducive to the healthy growth of the movement. The masses must be made 'literacy-minded' by a nation-wide campaign wherein all forces that are working in the land for the betterment of the people must join hands in one supreme effort. A whirlwind campaign condemning illiteracy must be carried on amongst all sections of the community. Unfortunately, it is as much necessary to educate the educated as to the conditions of illiteracy in India as it is to acquaint the illiterates with the desirability of acquiring literacy.

In Soviet Russia, where illiteracy has been all but wiped out during a course of twenty years, they succeeded in doing so, because they were able to create an atmosphere where illiteracy came to be looked upon as a great national evil. Speaking about Russia and its campaign against illiteracy Mr. Counts of the Columbia University says: "A psychological ferment has been started that already has profoundly disturbed and transformed the mentality of a population of one hundred and sixty million. People have been taught to read; men and women have been told to hope; ideas have been disseminated on an unprecedented scale; forces have been released that can never be controlled." [195]

195. *Modern Review*, April 1935, p. 494

It is true that Russian methods cannot be imitated in India; but even if a fraction of the 'psychological ferment' that Russia was able to start into the mass mind is made available to the Indian masses, substantial results will follow.

The ferment could be more easily started among the masses in cities and towns than among the village people, because the attainment of literacy has some definite and immediate social and economic value in cities and towns. Teachers of the right sort are easily available and the gathering of the illiterates for the purpose of instruction is not difficult of achievement. Cities and towns are, therefore, the most suitable fields for beginning an attack on illiteracy through adult education. This does not mean that the village dwellers should not be tackled until the townsfolk are touched. The problem of villages is the most important, because India is a land of villages. All that is suggested is that a beginning might be made in the cities and the experience so acquired may later on be used in dealing with the village people.

Such schemes of adult education as have been tried in India have shown that irregularity of attendance is almost proverbial amongst the adults attending the adult classes. This is mainly due, however, to the want of proper methods and material used for adult instruction. The adult student, when he attends a class in the evening or at night, is, in most cases, particularly in cities, a tired person. He has put in a full day's work. He must have some recreation just to set his mental faculties ready to apply themselves to the dry and dull task of mastering letters. It is, therefore, necessary to intersperse the formal instruction in reading with activities which will recreate him and at the same time instruct him. Forms of such recreative and educative activities have to be chosen and used with discretion. What these activities should be, experience alone will tell.

Even so, however, the adults will continue to be irregular to some extent in attendance. But this will have to be tolerated until public pressure would make it necessary for the adults to acquire literacy. Why do children go to school? Not because they like the school. They must go to school or else they will receive a wholesale condemnation from everyone they meet. It is the force of long-established traditions that keeps the average youngster at school. Until such traditions are established, all that can be done is to make the adult school as attractive and interesting to the adults as possible. To treat the adult sympathetically and even with respect will prove of great help in attracting him. Encourage him at every step, tell him how easy it is to learn, give him a word of praise, and the adult will be quite willing to continue his education.

Should adult education be made compulsory? Mr. K. N. Kini in his Report on the Educational Survey of Mysore has made out an excellent case for Compulsory Adult Instruction. This is a consummation much to be desired, for, if it were possible, the pace of literacy in the country will be accelerated ten-fold or even more. So far as the promotion of literacy is concerned, Mr. Kini significantly points out: "The most formidable impediment against the spread of literacy is the enormous illiteracy of large masses of adult population. Our efforts to check retardation, elimination and wastage in the primary classes will bear fruit only if measures are undertaken to impart a minimum amount of literacy to the adult population, male as well as female, as much as would enable them to read vernacular newspapers and magazines and take lively interest in the affairs of the nation. When parents themselves possess the advantage of education, it is highly probable, nay even certain, that they would themselves without any external stimuli send their children to school in no inconsiderable numbers." [196]

In a country which has chosen democracy as its goal, an intelligent interest in its affairs by the adult population is essential. A child if he becomes literate at the age of, say 10, has to wait for another ten years till he is able to take active part in the affairs of the State; while a literate adult immediately steps in to contribute his quota to the Government of the country and the life of the community in which he lives. This difference alone is enough to interest a democratically constituted State to take immediate and extensive measures for the promotion of adult education, apart from other considerations.

XIX. CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters the various aspects of the problem of literacy in India have been dealt with in considerable detail. It is unnecessary, therefore, to restate the conclusions reached. The pivotal problem, on which the whole of the discussion in this book hinges, is to examine the causes of the very slow growth of literacy in India and to make suggestions for the acceleration of its pace. The history of a century shows that the percentage of literacy in this country has risen from 6 to 8 in a hundred years.[197] These figures, by themselves, would damp the ardour of the most zealous reformist.

One important reason of the low percentage of literacy recorded in India is, as has already been stated (Chapter I), that the literacy standard adopted today by the Census authorities is much higher. Owing largely to this, the percentage today comes to only 8; but if it is estimated on the basis adopted in many countries of the world, it would be at least twice as much. Even so, however, the position would appear

196. Report, p. 159.
197. *Mass Education in India*—Parulekar, p. 4. (This volume p. 44.)

to be most unsatisfactory, because in modern times an educationally C3 nation can never aspire to be a politically A1 nation. In this connection it is worthy of note that Russia removed the blot of illiteracy within about two decades and the Philippines have attained 50 per cent literacy within the space of a generation. So backward a country as China is reported to have more than 20 per cent literates. Unlike India, these countries, in adopting a standard of literacy, have been less ambitious but have proceeded on the basis that progress is possible only if it contains within itself the seeds of its own momentum. These nations are taking pride in their achievements and are cheerfully proceeding along the path of progress. In India, on the other hand, the outlook is one of unrelieved gloom which is deepened by the results of the decennial Censuses which show little or no progress at all.

It is not suggested that India should lower her literacy ideal. She may adopt a stricter definition as a goal to be reached. But to prevent misconception of the literacy attainments of India among the nations of the world, an estimate of literacy based upon the common world definition should be made in India along with that of the other type of literacy now prescribed for Census purposes. Not only will such enumeration help India to take her rightful place among the nations of the world in point of literacy, but it will also help to remove to some extent the prevailing pessimism.

The low percentages of literacy recorded by the population Censuses is attributable to yet another cause which is that the high birth and death rates prevailing in this country take away nearly three-fourths of the literate products of the schools, leaving only one-fourth to add to the actual increase in the percentage of literacy from decade to decade. In dealing with the Indian literacy problem and in assessing its results, this fundamental fact is often ignored and conclusions are drawn belittling the results of the educational system of the country. This attitude, as is obvious, is unscientific because comparisons are only possible between strictly comparable facts. Therefore, if the educational attainments of India in mass education are to be compared with those of other countries, the countries to be selected for purposes of comparison should have a social and economic background similar to that of India.

A well-planned system of instruction of the adult illiterates is a powerful means of increasing mass literacy. This problem has been all but ignored hitherto in this country.

Despite extenuating circumstances, however, the fact remains that the percentage of literacy in India is very low and that its growth has been alarmingly tardy. The most potent cause of this halting progress is the smallness of the number of pupils under instruction in schools. A study of the educational statistics of other countries shows that soon after their deciding to launch upon a programme of mass

education, the numbers in schools have swollen to a remarkable extent. In India, on the other hand, at no time has this occurred. It should be remembered that in any scheme of mass education, education must 'pour and not trickle'. The key to a rapid expansion of mass education in India lies in increasing the numbers under instruction in schools as quickly as possible.

It is possible that, among other things, the slow expansion of education in India is due to her inability to find the necessary funds, and there is no doubt that unless India finds the requisite funds she may not be in a position to meet the fullest demands of mass education. Formidable as this difficulty is, it would not be wise to sit with folded hands and do nothing until funds are available. If our belief in attaining mass literacy is as sincere as it has been vocal, an attempt must be made to devise ways and means to achieve expansion within the available resources.

So far, no serious effort was made to achieve mass literacy, firstly because of the difficulty of finance, but mainly because of a lack of missionary zeal on the part of the administrators of education to achieve this object. The alien character of the government of the country was the main impediment to progress. It is common knowledge that the British administrators of Indian education have from the earliest times emphasized quality as against quantity, and in their misconceived enthusiasm they have steadily and successfully resisted all efforts at expansion when the slightest lowering of quality was suspected. They did not consider the other view, viz. that quality is only a relative term and must have its roots in the life and needs of a community. Besides, in dealing with Indian education, the insular character of the British has always come in the way of their seeking guidance from any other country but Britain and that too modern Britain.

The reform of the Indian educational system with a view to mass literacy within the present financial resources may here be briefly considered. Any student of education is first of all struck by the smallness of the number of pupils entrusted per teacher in Indian schools. India seems to have maintained for more than three-quarters of a century an average number of pupils per teacher at about 25. This number is perhaps the lowest in the world. This apparent extravagance has been indulged in in the name of 'quality'. If expansion is therefore to be achieved the first step to be taken would be to increase the number of pupils per teacher.

In Chapter XV the part-time system of instruction adopted in various countries of the world and the success achieved through it by some of the agricultural countries have been described in some detail. This system in its various forms, including what is called the 'shift system' has hardly ever been a part and parcel of the Indian educational

system. Its adoption will greatly add to the number of pupils under instruction without a proportionate increase in the cost. Here then is a great opportunity for bringing about rapid expansion which must be seized and utilized, if we are in earnest about mass education.

A striking feature of the Indian educational system is the very large proportion of pupils who fail and thus have to repeat the same class twice or even longer. On an average, the Indian primary schools annually fail more than 50 per cent of their pupils. This has been going on almost from the inception of the system of education in India under the British rule. The percentage of failures is unparalleled in the educational history of the world. This appalling rate of failures has resulted in checking the growth of literacy to a very considerable extent. Children who have spent three or more years in school have to leave it without attaining literacy, because the administration would not permit their promotion to a higher class in the name of quality.

This brings us to the problem of the 1st year class in which the percentage of detentions is the largest. This class has been the stumbling block of young children in their school career and has thus given a great set-back to the progress of literacy through the agency of schools. Improvement in the system of admissions to this class and promotions to the next, on the lines suggested in the foregoing pages, will greatly promote mass literacy.

One of the chief defects of the Indian educational system is that its administrative problems do not receive adequate attention. The Universities from which guidance in such matters is expected have no departments for such study; nor are there any other agencies imparting such knowledge. To achieve progress it is necessary for the leaders of Indian educational administration to acquire a critical knowledge of the organization of their own administration as also of foreign countries, particularly of such as are akin to India in their social and economic needs. In this respect critical field surveys of districts or even of smaller units would enable educational administrators to arrive at correct views on the various problems relating to Indian education and its methods and practices.

Of all the evils which afflict the Indian system of education perhaps the worst has been the tutelage of its teaching and administrative staffs. This has had a two-fold effect. Firstly, the teachers have not been able to give their best, and secondly, the administrative staffs working under the surveillance of the departmental heads have found it impossible to depart from routine and take initiative to explore fresh avenues of reform. This has been the fault of the system rather than of individuals, because the fear of expressing views which may go counter to those of persons in authority has helped to stifle all initiative. Unless the system is so changed that this spirit of apathy and implicit acquiescence yields

place to one of fearless enquiry and expression, there is little hope for the future of Indian education.

An almost impassioned plea has been raised in these pages for the organization of a nation-wide drive for the early liquidation of mass illiteracy in the hope and belief that literacy would add to the moral and material welfare of the Indian people. The study of history tells us that every nation, the moment it aspired to raise its status in the eyes of the world, has, as the first urgent measure, attempted to remove illiteracy and that its progress has synchronized with the liquidation of illiteracy. It is arguable, of course, that this may not happen in our unhappy land. But, " if water chokes, what shall we drink? "

APPENDIX A

THE SYSTEM OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE DUTCH EAST INDIES

The system of primary education in the Dutch East Indies for the benefit of the natives of the islands is based upon the following three kinds of schools :

(1) *The Village School of Three Grades.* The Government and the village community co-operate in maintaining the school, the latter supplying the school building and the former paying the teachers' salaries.

(2) *The Continuation School.* Pupils who have finished the village school course of three grades can go on to the continuation school which teaches the 4th to the 6th grades. These schools are provided wherever there is a sufficient number of pupils. In some cases such a school has the 4th and 5th grades only.

(3) *The Complete Vernacular School.* This school has all the first three grades of a village school and, in addition, it teaches the 4th and 5th grades or all the three upper grades, 4th, 5th and 6th, according to the requirements of the locality.

From the above arrangement of the three types of schools and the grades or classes taught in them, it is clear that the ideal is to attain universal elementary education of six grades. But the ideal is deliberately kept aside for the present, considering the practical aspects of the question, especially the financial one.

A former Head of the Department of Education says :

" The present organization of vernacular education cannot be looked upon as more than a modest beginning, especially in regard to the quality of instruction. When in the early part of this century (1907) the Government set itself the task of founding in a much larger way elementary schools for the population, the type of school then existing appeared to be too expensive for wide extension. A complete equipment with that sort of school would have cost at least as much as the whole

amount of the budget of those days. It may be expected that, with increasing prosperity of the population, the number of standard schools (complete vernacular schools mentioned as type 3 above) in proportion to the village schools will rise until finally the two types will have grown together into a normal primary school of 6 classes. Undoubtedly this process will take much time, but there is no other possible way, within the bounds of the country's financial capacity, of arriving at a normal educational organization." [1]

"Owing to the financial and economic situation, at the start, no higher subject could be proposed than reduction of illiteracy; now this object in itself is of high value, if it were only because illiteracy forms an obstacle to the full effect of measures for the peoples' welfare. Besides, it is a matter of social value that young people should, during some years, have to adapt themselves to a good school discipline." [2]

Some of the features of the internal organization of the village school may be noted :

(1) *The Curriculum.* In these village schools the instruction is very elementary, consisting only of reading, writing and arithmetic and a little physics and biology as far as it can be applied to the pupil's daily life. It should be particularly noted that in arithmetic the three years' course of instruction is confined to the simple rules and ciphering not further than 1,000. "The chief task of these schools is to combat illiteracy." [3]

(2) *Hours of Instruction.* "School hours are divided in such a way that the first half of the day is assigned to the first class and the second to the second class and the third together, one school master sometimes aided by an assistant can do the whole teaching." [4] The school meets from 7-30 a.m. to 1 p.m. There are no afternoon classes because of the tropical climate. The first grade enters the building at 7-30 a.m. and stays until 10 a.m. The second grade enters at 10 a.m. and leaves at 1 p.m. and the third remains from 7-30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

"The advantages of this organisation are, first : the teachers do not have to divide their attention among too many grades; second : that pupils of the first and second grades are not overburdened; third : that the parents can still use their children for home duties; fourth : that because of the density of the population, transportation offers no difficulties; fifth : that even in case of one-teacher school a decent standard of education is guaranteed." [5]

(3) *Pupils per Teacher.* In 1935, in the village schools of three grades, there were 15,18,700 pupils taught by 30,737 teachers, thus giving on an average 49.4 or say 50 pupils per teacher.

(4) *Teachers and their Supervision.* It appears that for the village schools the teachers are trained in a normal course of 2 years' duration, the candidates joining the course after the completion of a 5-year course of the vernacular school.

1. *Asiatic Review*, 1934, p. 120.
2. ibid., p. 122.
3. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1925*, p. 240.
4. *The Asiatic Review*, 1934, p. 120.
5. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1937*, pp. 99-100.

" As far as possible the teacher is chosen from the district, preferably even from the very village in which the school is located. There he can live in his surroundings, in his house, on or near his own plot of land. He knows the people and he will easily inspire confidence in the school. Care is taken that the standard of living of the teacher does not differ too much from the average of the other villagers. Their salaries are therefore determined by local standards." [6]

The supervision over these schools seems to be strict as one supervisor is given to look after 50 village schools.

(5) *Admission to Schools.* Admission to schools is only allowed during the first month after the beginning of the course unless a pupil is transferred from another school. Children above the age of 8 years who have not yet attended another school are not admitted. The school meets for 10 months, there being two vacations of a month each.

(6) *Free and Compulsory Education.* The education given in these village schools is neither free nor compulsory. Apart from the very poor, everybody is expected to contribute a small fee. " This condition is a matter of principle, as experience has shown that people appreciate only things for which they pay." [7]

" Compulsion has not yet been introduced, first because it is not regarded as a sensible procedure to put compulsion in the law and not to enforce it (as it is done in the most of the Southern States of the United States and in some other countries), and second because the population would not understand the use of it and would resent it as an encroachment on the social and economic order. In Holland itself education was not made compulsory until there was practically universal education." [8]

(7) *A Special Feature.* " All native schools of any size are provided with a popular library by the Bureau of Popular Literature in the chief language of the district in which the school is located." [9]

It appears that this work is more systematically carried on in connection with the continuation schools.

" Connected with the continuation schools are the popular libraries which contain books not only for children but for adults. Apart from the classics of Javanese literature and novels translated from European languages, there are popular manuals written in the vernacular or Malay on hygiene, agriculture, animal husbandry, and other useful subjects. The books are supplied by the Government Bureau of Popular Literature which also publishes literature in the vernacular giving information on what is happening in the world, on scientific discoveries, on the discussion in Parliament, on common diseases and so on. These libraries are regarded as an essential element of the whole educational system. They are enjoying a growing popularity. From a modest beginning in 1908 the Bureau of Popular Literature has developed into a great institution which works miracles with a moderate budget." [10]

---

6. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1937*, p. 97.
7. ibid., p. 98.
8. ibid., pp. 98-99.
9. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1925*, p. 250.
10. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1937*, p. 98.

"The work of popular education is supported by an organization for providing popular reading matter. Properly speaking, this is no doubt a matter for private enterprise. But failing that, the Government itself has assumed this task also, since only half the work is done unless the population learning to read can find proper reading matter." [11]

(8) *Statistical Information.*

(i) Population and pupils:

Year	Population (in lakhs)	Pupils in vernacular schools (in lakhs)	Percentage
1912 ..	450	6.2	1.4
1920 ..	473	7.5	1.6
1930 ..	581	14.8	2.6
1935 ..	639	17.9	2.8

(ii) Pupils classified according to classes (1935):

Class	Pupils (000)	Percentage
1st Year ..	680	38.0
2nd Year ..	507	28.4
3rd Year ..	386	21.6
4th Year ..	116	6.6
5th Year ..	89	5.4
6th Year ..	8	
Total ..	1786	100.0

(iii) Promotions (1935):

	Pupils on roll (000)	Promoted pupils (000)	Percentage
Class I to Class II ..	680	494	73
Class II to Class III ..	507	403	80

From	Number of pupils before promotion (000)	Pupils promoted or graduated (000)	Percentage
Village schools ..	1519	1173	77.2
Continuation schools ..	187	164	88.2
Complete vernacular schools ..	81	70	86.4
Total ..	1787	1407	80

11. *The Asiatic Review*, 1934, p. 123.

On the question as to why in the Dutch East Indies a three-year course is considered adequate for the 'foundation school', a high Dutch official says :

" Several questions have been raised in connection with this form of elementary education. Some people have doubted whether a *Grundschule* of three grades can be regarded as sufficient. The answer is that school statistics in the Dutch East Indies, in Indo-China, in British India, in Siam, in the Philippine Islands, in the rural districts of France, Italy, and the United States (especially in the Southern States and South Western States) show that the majority of the rural students do not go further than the third grade. . . . The system in the Dutch East Indies is based on this fact. Since the number of continuation schools is increased according to the number of students available, the system is in no way a barrier to further education." [12]

It will be seen from the above statement that the establishment of a three-year foundation school (village school) is based upon social and economic conditions of the people for whom the system is meant to give a modest education befitting their needs. No attempt is made to force things and pitch them to a high level which may be far above the sustaining power of the people themselves. The system has, therefore, been very helpful in fighting illiteracy amongst the masses.

In connection with the progress of literacy the following observations are worth quoting :

" Illiteracy.—The statistics of illiteracy, however, are still very high because the educational system is recent and the older generation which never went to school has not yet died out. As it passes away, the figures of literacy will improve by leaps. Moreover, the statistics of illiteracy of the Dutch East Indies cannot be used for comparison with those of many other countries where one is usually classified as literate as soon as the question of the Census officer " Are you able to read and write your own name " is answered in the affirmative. In the East Indies a man must give evidence of his ability which makes a not unimportant difference. . . . Between 1920 and 1930 literacy figures improved 228 per cent." [13]

The robust optimism prevailing in the Dutch East Indies regarding the efficiency of the system is well expressed by the following words of a high educational officer :

" Although this system of education might seem a rather slow one, the progress made in the last twenty-five years and the steady improvement in the percentage of attendance show that it is gratifyingly sure." [14]

It will be of interest to know what they are doing in the French Indo-China regarding Mass Education. A few details which are available will show that the French and the Dutch are following practically the same lines for the educational uplift of the masses whose destiny they are controlling in their eastern possessions.

" On the first level are the schools for the masses. . . . The course provided in these schools covers a three-year period. If this limitation

12. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1935*, p. 95.
13. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1937*, p. 99.
14. ibid.

of the elementary programme to three years is to be understood, it must first be realised that the vast majority of the children cannot really devote more than three years to school. . . . Thus three years of schooling appears to be sufficient for the masses and a period of this length represents an enormous progress for the hordes who had been intellectually neglected before the beginning of French Colonization." [15]

The age of admission to schools is fixed at 7. Compulsion was introduced in only one part of the country in 1927. It is confined to " at least three years and for children between the ages eight to thirteen ".

A French officer writes about the Indo-China system of mass education :

" The results have completely fulfilled our hopes and, although the time has not yet been long to bring them to their normal and total completion, they are astonishing enough to all those who have taken trouble to examine and understand them." [16]

APPENDIX B

DEATH-RATE AMONG THE LITERATES IN INDIA

According to the Life Table given in the Census Report of 1931, India, Vol. I, Part I (p. 173), it is found that, in India, in the case of males, if there are 60,161 children of age 5, their number after 10 years, i.e. at age 15, dwindles by deaths to 54,112. This means that the death-rate for males aged 5 years for a period of 10 years is 10.05 $\left(\frac{60161 - 54112}{60161} \times 100\right)$ per cent.

Calculating from the same Life Table similar death-rate for a period of 10 years for children who are aged 10, i.e. till they reach the age of 20, it is found to be 9.32 $\left(\frac{56457 - 51203}{56467} \times 100\right)$ per cent.

In order to find out the death-rate for 10 years amongst the group aged 5 to 10 years, it is necessary to take the average of the death-rates for ages 5 and 10, which are, as previously ascertained, 10.05 and 9.32 respectively. The average of these two figures is 9.69 $\left(\frac{10.05 + 9.32}{2}\right)$ or 9.7.

Similar calculations based on the figures given in the Life Table yield 10.5 as death-rate for the age group 10 to 15 and 13 for the age-group 15 to 20.

The number of literates of ages 20 and over are not given in the Census Reports in separate age-groups, but are given in the age-group ' 20 and over '. Hence, the death-rate for a period of 10 years for this age-group has to be ascertained by another set of figures in the Life Table. From the same Life Table (Column 6) it is seen that if there are 15,13,935 males living above age 20, the number of those living above

---

15. *Columbia University Education Year Book, 1931*, p. 508.
16. ibid., p. 514.

the age of 30 will be 10,36,776. The death-rate for a decade, therefore, in the case of males of ages '20 and over' will come to 31.52 $\left(\frac{477159}{1513935} \times 100\right)$ or say 31.5.

Applying these death-rates to the male literates for all-India (including Indian States and Burma), as recorded in the Census Report of 1921, India, Vol. I, Part II (p. 72), it is found that the death-rate for the decade 1921 to 1931 for all male literates comes to 25.8 per cent. The calculations made are shown in the following table :

Age-group	Literates in 1921	Death-rate per cent for the decade 1921–1931	Deaths
*5–10 ..	9,39,000	9.7	91,083
10–15 ..	26,84,000	10.5	2,81,820
15–20 ..	28,26,000	13.0	3,67,380
20 & over ..	1,61,65,000	31.5	50,91,975
Total ..	2,26,14,000†	25.8	58,32,258

Similar calculations based on the Life Table—All-India Females (p. 174 of the Census Report of 1931, Vol. I, Part II) and on the number of female literates recorded in 1921 (Census Report, India, Vol. I, Part II, page 73), show that the death-rate among literate females of all groups taken together for the decade 1921-31, comes to 25.5 per cent. The relevant figures are given in the following table :

Age-group	Female literates in 1921	Death-rate per cent for the decade 1921–1931	Deaths
5–10 ..	2,39,000	10.3	24,617
10–15 ..	4,64,000	13.3	61,712
15–20 ..	4,52,000	17.4	78,648
20 & over ..	16,28,000	33.5	5,45,380
Total ..	27,83,000	25.5	7,10,357

As the number of female literates in India is about 12 per cent of the total literates—males and females—the male death-rate which is 25.8 may be safely taken as the standard death-rate.

In adopting a death-rate for literates of all ages one factor has to be taken into account. The Life Tables on which calculations are based give figures for all males and females, irrespective of their literacy attainments. An opinion is, however, expressed in some quarters that the death-rate among the literates must be somewhat less than among

* In the figures given in the Census Report this age-group is shown as 0-10. But as children below 5 are not counted in literary figures, the group really represents ages 5 to 10.

† Number of literates of unspecified ages is omitted from these figures.

the illiterates. This assumption, it appears, is based on the supposition that generally the economic condition of literates is better than that of the illiterates and, therefore, literates are subjected to the risk of death to a lesser extent than illiterates. Whether the economic superiority of literates can make an appreciable difference in their mortality rate is a question which is open to doubt on several grounds. And yet, to err on the safe side, an allowance of 10 per cent may be made to account for this difference in the conditions of living. Instead of 25.8 the death-rate for literates of all ages, males and females, may, therefore, be reduced by about 10 per cent and taken at 23 for general calculations.

Death-rate among New Literates

It may be assumed that a boy would attain literacy between the ages 9 and 12. The death-rate for this age-group (9-12) for nine years is 9.5 (males). The earliest batch of new literates produced during the decade will have a risk of death for nine years, say, from 1922 to 1931, and the last batch in the decade, say, that of 1931, will have no risk of death as they will be counted in the Census the very year. The average death-rate will, therefore, for all new literates during nine years come to nearly half the average for nine years, i.e. to 4.8 or say 5 per cent.

APPENDIX C

A NOTE ON THE ATTEMPTS AT CORRELATION OF THE CENSUS AND EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS MADE BY SOME WRITERS

(1) Extract from the 'Progress of Education in India', 1922-27, Vol. I, page 124 :

" 204.—It is interesting to discover what progress was made during the period 1911-21. The census for 1911 shows the number of literates for that year as about 154 lakhs, while the similar figure for 1921 is 187 lakhs; thus the number of literates increased by about 33 lakhs in ten years, or at an average rate of 3.3 lakhs per year. To check this figure let us take the middle year of the decade under consideration, namely, 1916-17 ; it is found that some 4.1 lakhs of pupils completed their fourth year primary course ; allowing a margin of 0.2 lakhs for failure to complete the course with such satisfaction as to render them literate, it is clear that about 3.9 lakhs may be considered to have become permanently literate, a figure which agrees sufficiently accurately with the figure 3.3 lakhs mentioned above to allow us to presume that literacy is attained only after about 4 years' effective schooling."

The following points should be noted :

(i) No account is taken of deaths among the literates of 1921 and of the new literates during the decade 1921-31. According to the death-rates (*vide* Appendix B) the number of deaths would come to 37 lakhs and therefore the number of the new literates ought to go up to 70 lakhs and not to 33 lakhs as shown in the calculations.

(ii) The margin of 5 per cent for failures is too small under any case.

(iii) A reference to the General Table X in the 'Progress of Education in India', 1916-17, Vol. II, page 57, will show that the figure 4.1 lakhs refers to the 5th year class and not to the 4th year class, although the figure is under the Roman figure IV.

Year	No. of Class IV pupils in British India
1922	6,35,604
1923	6,46,962
1924	6,72,412
1925	6,68,345
1926	7,10,895
1927	7,67,921
1928	8,03,155
1929	8,57,409
1930	8,99,619
1931	9,98,097
Total	76,60,419

(2) Extract from the Census of India Report, 1931, Vol. I (India), Part I, pp. 335-336: "The Education Department consider that four years at school is required to give permanent literacy, and that the number of literates turned out in any year can therefore be gauged by the number of pupils reading in Class IV in that year. The marginal figures give their numbers annually for the past decade, making a total of 76,60,419. Of these persons it is considered that at least 20% and, possibly, as much as 25% would be found unfit for promotion, that is to say they have not been rendered permanently literate, so that almost that portion of them may be regarded as having already relapsed into illiteracy by 1931, resulting in a minimum estimate of 57,50,000 persons rendered literate in British India during the decade. Now the actual increase in the number of literates in British India since 1921 is 40,73,030, a figure which is fairly comparable with the Education Department's estimate when allowance has been made both for the decrease to be replaced among previous literates on account of their mortality during the decade and for casualties among the new literates themselves."

	Total number of literates in India in 1921	and in 1931
India	226,23,651	281,31,315
Provinces	186,54,541	227,27,571
States	39,69,110	54,03,744

In these calculations the following points may be noted:

(i) The number assigned to deaths among the old and new literates is about 17 lakhs. According to the death-rates (*vide* Appendix B) the number would come to about 48 lakhs.

(ii) The percentage of 'unfit for promotion' is taken at 25. Taking into consideration the great number of 'repeaters' this figure seems to be low. It should be particularly noted that in the first Extract quoted above the same percentage is taken at 5, which is obviously very low.

(3) Extract from 'Report on the Primary Education for Boys and Girls in U.P.' (1934), p. 11:

"Literacy of the type required is achieved in Class IV (i.e. the 5th year class in U.P.). It is not necessary to pass Class IV, but it is essential to be admitted to it. There has always been a consensus of opinion in this matter. Mr. Harrop in his report says:

It is uncontestable that unless a boy reaches Class IV he carries away nothing of lasting value.

In the Hartog Report we find (page 45):

We think it justifiable to assume that, on the average, no child who has not completed a primary course of at least four years will become permanently literate.

"In support of these views there is the simple proof of the census record as below. In 1921 there were in the United Provinces 15,56,626 literate males. In 1931 there were 20,43,410 or an increase 4,86,784. The death-rate for these Provinces is 26 per mille per annum for adults. It follows that of the 15,56,626 literate males of 1921, 4,04,716 died during the decade. This loss was made good by the outturn from our schools as well as the increase of 4,86,784. The round figures are 9 lakhs or 90,000 per annum. The enrolment given in the quinquennial report for 1932 shows the enrolment of Class IV as 92,000 which is close enough."

The following points are worth noting:

(i) In the beginning, only males are considered but later on the figure in the Educational Report is taken for males and females.

(ii) The figure of pupils in the IV (i.e. the 5th year) class in U.P. for 1932 is taken as the average annual figure for the decade 1922-31. The figure as taken is very much exaggerated. In fact, the average annual figure for the decade comes to about 69,000 and not 92,000 as taken in the calculations.

(iii) No account is taken of the 'repeaters' in the 5th year class.

It would be of interest to refer to the following reports where similar attempts are made to correlate Census and Educational figures:

(1) Census of India, 1921. Volume XVII. Baroda State, Part I, paras 302ff.[17]

(2) Census of India, 1931. Volume XIX. Baroda State, Part I, paras 327ff.

(3) Census of India, 1921. Volume XV. Punjab and Delhi, Part I, paras 153-156.

(4) Census of India, 1931. Volume XVII. Punjab, Part I, para 179.

---

17. The peculiarity of the calculations made here is that the writer makes his calculations on the assumption that the completion of the 3rd year class gives literacy. In Baroda, up to the year 1924-25, there was no Infants class and hence the 'third standard' was the 3rd year class. The writer says: "The real test of literacy is the third standard examination. The yearly batches of children that pass this test and go up to the fourth standard are the annual contribution of the Educational Department to the literate class of the State."

APPENDIX D(i)

Statement showing number of pupils on roll in each class during the ten years 1922 to 1931

(The figures are in thousands)

Year	BRITISH INDIA (including Burma)					BURMA		
	First Year Class	Second Year Class	Third Year Class	Fourth Year Class	Fifth Year Class	Third Year Class	Fourth Year Class	Fifth Year Class
1921-22 ..	3343	1556	924	635	377	41	25	14
1922-23 ..	3992	1343	924	647	323	43	26	15
1923-24 ..	4258	1380	982	672	360	45	27	16
1924-25 ..	4671	1402	962	668	368	47	29	17
1925-26 ..	4986	1544	1066	710	395	49	32	19
1926-27 ..	5280	1638	1131	768	427	52	32	21
1927-28 ..	5470	1858	1243	803	474	59	35	23
1928-29 ..	5561	1884	1315	857	503	56	38	24
1929-30 ..	5662	1952	1367	900	523	65	40	27
1930-31 ..	5266	2125	1481	998	613	69	46	30
Total	48492	16682	11395	7658	4363	526	330	206

APPENDIX D(ii)

Statement showing number of pupils on roll and number promoted from each of the first five classes during the years 1922 to 1931, Bombay Presidency

(The figures are in thousands)

Year	First Year Class		Second Year Class		Third Year Class		Fourth Year Class		Fifth Year Class	
	Roll	Pro-moted	Roll	Pro-moted	Roll	Pro-moted	Roll	Pro-moted	Roll	Pro-moted
1921-22 ..	304	(134)	142	76	123	57	94	43	70	32
1922-23 ..	288	(127)	150	83	128	68	98	51	72	36
1923-24 ..	287	(126)	157	85	132	70	104	56	83	38
1924-25 ..	281	(123)	161	89	138	72	109	58	91	42
1925-26 ..	307	134	175	96	143	78	115	64	94	47
1926-27 ..	352	140	183	102	151	83	120	67	99	49
1927-28 ..	372	177	183	120	156	99	122	81	99	57
1928-29 ..	346	178	184	120	161	101	126	79	102	57
1929-30 ..	398	160	189	119	162	96	129	78	105	56
1930-31 ..	414	182	192	127	166	107	131	89	107	64
Total	3349	1481	1716	1017	1460	831	1148	666	922	478

N.B.—Figures in brackets are approximate.

APPENDIX D(iii)

Statement showing number of pupils on roll in the 3rd year class and 4th year class in some of the Provinces in British India during the years 1922 to 1931

(The figures are in thousands)

	Madras		Bombay		Bengal		U.P.		B. & O.		C.P.		Punjab		Burma	
	III	IV	III	IV	III	IV	III	IV	III	IV	III	IV	III	IV	III	IV
1922 ..	217	167	123	94	191	113	96	68	88	63	51	42	69	50	41	25
1923 ..	232	177	128	98	214	89	98	71	95	72	51	43	75	57	43	26
1924 ..	251	189	132	104	195	89	106	78	103	72	51	44	79	64	45	27
1925 ..	270	201	138	109	185	90	115	83	107	72	53	46	86	67	47	29
1926 ..	286	215	143	115	199	91	126	92	107	38	56	49	93	74	49	32
1927 ..	305	230	151	120	199	96	139	101	125	46	61	50	96	83	52	32
1928 ..	321	242	156	122	257	118	153	113	130	53	61	55	106	84	59	35
1929 ..	339	256	161	126	274	127	166	120	133	55	67	59	118	90	56	38
1930 ..	355	268	162	129	285	133	178	126	133	55	69	61	129	98	65	40
1931 ..	367	280	166	131	275	117	177	128	134	52	71	50	135	107	69	46
Total	2943	2225	1460	1148	2274	1063	1354	980	1155	578	594	499	986	774	526	330

APPENDIX D(iv)

Statement showing Literacy Statistics of some Provinces & States

Name of Province or State	Population (000)			Literates (000)			Percentage		
	1911	1921	1931	1911	1921	1931	1911	1921	1931
Assam ..	6714	7606	9248	327	483	897	4.9	6.3	9.7
Bengal ..	45483	46696	50114	3522	4255	4694	7.7	9.0	9.4
B. & O. ..	34490	34002	37678	1419	1586	17C4	4 1	4.7	4.5
Bombay ..	19673	19292	21808	1374	1646	2004	7.0	8.5	9.2
C P. & Berar ..	13916	13913	15508	496	633	868	3.6	4.6	5 6
Madras ..	41405	42319	46740	3094	3622	4319	7.5	8.6	9.3
Punjab ..	19975	20685	23581	775	833	1248	3.9	4 3	5.3
U.P. ..	47185	45376	48409	1619	1689	2260	3.4	3 7	4.7
Baroda ..	2033	2127	2444	205	272	435	10.1	12.3	17.8
Gwalior ..	—	3186	3523	—	110	141	—	3 4	4.0
Hyderabad ..	13375	12472	14436	368	365	596	2.8	2.9	4.1
Kashmir ..	3104	3260	3646	65	72	124	2.1	2.2	3.4
Cochin ..	—	—	1205	—	—	339	—	—	28.1
Travancore ..	2952	4006	5096	513	967	1218	15.0	24.1	23.9
Mysore ..	5806	5979	6557	365	443	595	6.3	7.4	9.1

LITERACY OF INDIA IN PRE-BRITISH DAYS

I. INTRODUCTORY

In October 1931, when Mahatma Gandhi was in London in connection with the Round Table Conference on Indian Affairs, in a speech delivered by him at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Mahatmaji was reported to have observed: "I say, without fear of my figures being challenged successfully, that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out." [1]

It was a challenge that could not be ignored and Sir Philip Hartog who, as the chairman of a sub-committee of the Indian Statutory Commission had to report on the condition of education in India, in 1928-29, was naturally persuaded to examine Mahatmaji's statement in the light of the available evidence on the question, which Sir Philip had special opportunities to study. It seems he had an interview with Mahatmaji in England, and there has been some correspondence between them, since. Referring to the interview and the correspondence, says Sir Philip: "I desire to acknowledge the courtesy with which Mr. Gandhi gave me the information at his disposal, both in writing and at a personal interview; and I shall not easily forget the charm and frankness with which he spoke, nor his ready promise, renewed in writing, publicly to retract his statement if I could convince him that it was not justified by the evidence." ('Some Aspects of Indian Education', Preface, p. vii.)

Sir Philip Hartog took an opportunity to controvert Mahatma Gandhi's statement, on the occasion of the three lectures (Joseph Payne Lectures) delivered by him at the Institute of Education, London (1935-36). Those lectures are now made available to the public, by the Oxford University Press, in a small book, named *Some Aspects of Indian Education, Past and Present.* Besides the three lectures, the book also contains three memoranda the chief purpose of which has been "to remove, if possible, once for all, the imaginary bases for the assertions not infrequently made in India that the British Government systematically destroyed the indigenous system of elementary schools, and with it a literacy which the schools are presumed to have created". ('Some Aspects of Indian Education', Preface, p. vii.)

---

1. *Some Aspects of Indian Education, Past and Present,* by Sir Philip Hartog (published by the Oxford University Press), p. 69.

The Times of India, Bombay, reviewed Sir Philip's book in a leader (15th June 1939) under the caption, "An Exploded Myth", giving publicity to the 'controversy' between Mahatma Gandhi and Sir Philip Hartog and pointing out how Sir Philip had successfully destroyed the 'myth' first circulated by John Adam, the Christian missionary employed by Sir William Bentinck, a hundred years ago, to take a survey of the indigenous education in Bengal and Bihar and who has in his Reports stated that there were probably 100,000 schools in Bengal and Bihar. Prof. A. N. Basu in the *Modern Review* of August 1939, has, on the other hand, tried to show that Mahatmaji's statement was not quite beside the mark.

If the talk which Sir Philip had with Mahatma Gandhi in England and the exchange of letters between them, after that, can be labled a 'controversy' and if Sir Philip's memoranda really present one side of the controversy, it is for Mahatmaji to present the other side. But the controversial aspect apart, the memoranda published by Sir Philip Hartog and the conclusions obtained by him do merit some attention in India where the problem of literacy is one of the foremost national problems and it is certainly worthwhile to find out if in the hundred years of the British rule, the literacy of India has made a perceptible advance, or if it has been almost where it was in Adam's time (1835), or if it has actually gone down as reported in Mahatmaji's speech in London. Because if Mahatmaji's contention be even partially true and the literacy percentage has been nearly the same for a hundred years, a radical reform would be needed in our administration of elementary schools if a decent percentage of literacy in a measurable time be the ideal in view.

There are three distinct statements in the reported speech of Mahatma Gandhi:

(i) India is more illiterate today than she was a hundred years ago;

(ii) India is more illiterate today than she was fifty years ago;

(iii) British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out.

The purpose of this paper is mainly to examine how far the first statement represents the true picture of the state of education in India a hundred years ago. The published documents relating to the state of indigenous education of the pre-British period are few. The following two which have supplied the material for this paper are both important and authentic, from the very nature of their source:

(1) Minutes of the Evidence taken by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, 1832, Volume I (Public). This will be hereafter referred to as "Minutes".

(2) Adam's Reports on the Vernacular Education in Bengal and Bihar submitted to the Government of India in 1835, 1836 and 1838. They were reprinted in 1868 by another Christian missionary, Long, with "A Brief View of the Past and Present Condition of Vernacular Education in Bengal". This will be hereafter referred to as "Long".

These two volumes have been also the sources used by Sir Philip Hartog for his memoranda which according to the *Times of India* have exploded the 'myth' of 100,000 schools in Bengal and Bihar. But statistics and other data must be seen with the correct background and perspective before drawing any definite conclusion from them; and when that is done it will appear that the view expressed by Mahatma Gandhi, that a hundred years of British rule in India has retarded rather than accelerated the progress of literacy in the country, is not quite untenable.

II. STATISTICS OF LITERACY: THEN AND NOW

Mahatma Gandhi's speech which raised the issue under discussion, viz. the extent of literacy in India now and a hundred years ago, was delivered in October 1931, when the census figures of 1931 were not available. Obviously, therefore, whatever statistical data regarding literacy that was at the back of Mahatma Gandhi's mind must have been from the census report of 1921, the latest which was then available to the public. The 1931 census report was published in 1933, i.e. two years after Mahatma Gandhi's speech in London. Again it seems that Mahatma Gandhi has sent to Sir Philip, for his information, transcripts of some articles on the subject published in December 1920, in *Young India*, a weekly with which Mahatma Gandhi was intimately connected.[2] When those articles were written, even the 1921 census figures were not available; and it thus seems very probable that the views which

2. "The chief authorities relating to the period mentioned in the documents sent to me by or on behalf of Mr. Gandhi are William Adam's *Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Bihar (1835-38)* and Leitner's *History of Education in the Punjab since Annexation and in 1882*. The documents also refer to certain statements in the valuable appendices to Minutes of Evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, of 1833, relating to Bombay and Madras.

"Mr. Gandhi kindly sent me (also) transcripts of the articles in *Young India* for 8 Dec. and 29 Dec. 1920, entitled 'The Decline of Mass Education in India' and 'How Indigenous Education Was Crushed in the Punjab, 1849-1886' by Mr. Daulatram Gupta, M.A., and Professor K. T. Shah in 1932 wrote to me a long letter on behalf of Mr. Gandhi who was in Yeravda Jail."—*Some Aspects of Indian Education*, p. 71.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed in his speech in 1931 had their origin in what he had read in December 1920 or earlier. The literacy statistics of the 1911 census rather than those of 1921 are, therefore, more pertinent to the enquiry undertaken to prove or disprove Mahatma Gandhi's statement regarding the literacy of India in the present and the pre-British times, based on statistical data. As Sir Philip has admitted in the report of the sub-committee of the Indian Statutory Commission, of which he was the chairman, the transfer of the Education Portfolio to Indian Ministers responsible to public opinion had evoked great enthusiasm and wide strides were taken in the decade 1921-30, in the field of primary education, though falling short, in a considerable measure, of the hopes and aspirations of the people of India. If Mahatmaji had before him the figures of 1931 census it is very likely that he would have modified his statement to make it clear what he meant by "today".

Secondly, Indians of Mahatma Gandhi's age and experience have a certain amount of direct and indirect knowledge of the state of education in India in the years 1850 to 1860 which, though not put down on record in terms of statistics and figures, has very likely shaped the view of Mahatma Gandhi which he expressed in his speech in 1931. It is possible for Indians of ripe age and experience to visualize the force and volume of certain aspects of a century-old Indian tradition by trying to remember the experiences of their childhood and what they had heard from their elders, an advantage which foreigners cannot possibly possess to the same extent. Sir Philip, probably handicapped by his ignorance of this indirect source of information regarding education in pre-British period has in his attempt to contradict the statement of Mahatma Gandhi, adhered and, from his viewpoint, rightly adhered to the available statistics. It is, therefore, necessary to eschew for a time, the weight of traditional knowledge, and to first discuss the available statistics of those old days and obtain their proper appraisement in the light of authoritative comments and statements which are older than the statistics themselves.

The only published statistics of literacy in India pertaining to a period, nearly a century old, are those in Adam's Report on the Vernacular Education in Bengal and Bihar. Figures regarding educational institutions, pupils and population, of other parts of India, relating to the same period, may be found, but nowhere else than in Adam's Reports are given statistics for literacy of that period. To Adam, therefore, goes the credit of being the first to realise the importance of finding out a numerical measure of the literacy attainments of the people of a part of India and to carry it into effect in his memorable Reports published during the years 1835-38.

Under instructions from Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General of India, Adam undertook an educational survey of some parts of Bengal and Bihar. His three Reports will ever remain as matchless documents supplying useful and instructive details about the many and varied aspects of the state of education in India before it was replaced by the British system.

The first Report of Adam was written by him in 1835. It contains a mass of second-hand material with regard to the state of education in most of the Districts of Bengal. His second Report, also written in 1835, confines itself to the state of education as he found it in his survey in the district of Rajshahi and particularly in Nattore, a sub-division of the district. His third Report, submitted in 1838, is the most important Report from every point of view. In that Report he gives statistics of population, adults and children, of educational institutions and of pupils attending 'schools' as well as of those under 'domestic instruction', i.e. taught privately at home. But the more important part of this Report of Adam is the statistical information about 'instructed' adults as he calls them. The statistics given in this Report of Adam mostly pertain to six well-marked units of population, one city and three *thanas* in Bengal and two *thanas* in Bihar. A *thana* is a sub-division of a district and corresponds to a 'Taluka' in the Province of Bombay. These statistics are not available in a consolidated form as one would wish them to be. They are, therefore, summarised in the three appendices, A, B, C, attached to this paper.

Appendix A—shows the tracts surveyed and the figures of their population under different age-groups.

„ B—gives the figures of 'instructed' adults under six categories.

„ C—gives the figures of children under instruction both at school and under domestic instruction.

In Indian census reports of 1911 onwards, figures of 'literate' persons include all persons above the age of five who are found to be of the census standard of literacy. While Adam gives only the figures of 'instructed' (or 'literate') adults who according to him were persons above the age of 14. He excludes children, i.e. persons below 14 from the figures of 'instructed' persons given by him, irrespective of their actual literacy attainments.

In order to get over these differences in the nature of figures of the 'instructed' given by Adam and those of the 'literate', given in the Indian census reports, it is proposed, in the first instance, to confine the comparison to the percentage of the 'instructed' adults of Adam and that of the 'literate' above the age of 15 in the Indian census reports.

Adam's Report : Figures of Instructed Adults, Bengal only

Statistics given by Adam	1835–36
1. Total population surveyed, Bengal units only, the first four units in appendix A ..	3,50,082=3·5 lakhs.
2. Total 'instructed' adults (above 14 in age) Bengal units, the first four units in Appendix B	18,043=0·18 lakhs.
3. Percentage of the instructed adults to the total population (Bengal units only) ..	$\frac{0 \cdot 18 \times 100}{3.5} = 5.1$

Census of India Reports : Figures of Literacy for India

(Excluding Burma)

	1911	1921	1931
1. Total population (in lakhs) ..	3014	3029	3359
2. Total adult literates above 15 in age (in lakhs)	135	158	205
3. Percentage of adult literates to the total population	4.5	5.2	6.0

The above two tables clearly show that if a comparison is made between the percentage of 'instructed' adults to the total population of the Bengal area, in Adam's time, and that of the 'literate' adults in India as revealed in 1911 and 1921, the former figure is greater than that of 1911 and almost the same as that of 1921.[3]

One may choose another way of comparing the literacy statistics. All the children above 5 years who were under instruction in the Bengal area surveyed by Adam, might be taken as 'literate'; and the total number of literate persons above 5 years and its percentage to the total population may be calculated both for Adam's figures and for those of 1911 and 1921 census reports.[3]

3. See footnote on page 10. (This Volume p. 219.)

	Adam's figures[4]	Census figures for India (excluding Burma)		
	1935–36	1911	1921	1931
1. Total population (in lakhs) ..	3.5	3014	3029	3359
2. Total number of literates of ages above 5 (in lakhs) ..	0.24	159	190	235
3. Percentage of literates to the total population	6.7	5.3	6.3	7

The above statement shows that even if the percentage of all literates to the total population (the usual percentage of literacy) is taken, it was higher in the time when Adam collected his statistics, it being presumed that the Bengal area surveyed by Adam was a fair sample of India as a whole.

The statistics for the two *thanas* in the two districts of Bihar surveyed by Adam are excluded from the above calculation of percentage of literacy, as owing to the character of the places selected by Adam one cannot be certain about the accuracy of the data supplied.[5] It will, however, be seen that the conclusion is not materially affected even if we were to compare the statistics of literacy of the whole area surveyed by Adam. Figures for such a comparison are available in Appendices A, B and C.

	Adam's figures	Census figures for India (excluding Burma)		
	1835–38	1911	1921	1931
1. Total population (in lakhs) ..	4.97	3014	3029	3359
2. Literate Adults (in lakhs) ..	0.22	135	158	205
3. Percentage of 2 to 1 ..	4.4	4.4	5.2	6.0
4. Total literates of age above 5 (in lakhs)	0.29	159	190	235
5. Percentage of 4 to 1 ..	5.8	5.3	6.3	7

4. Bengal units only.
5. It will be seen from the Appendices attached to this paper that out of the six units of population surveyed by Adam, four were in Bengal and two in Bihar. As

The above figures reveal that even on mere strength of available statistics India was distinctly better off in point of literacy in Adam's days than in 1911 and almost on a par in 1921. In 1931 the increase in literacy percentage was distinctly perceptible and the comparison is more in favour of 1931.[6]

The question may be asked here, "Has not Sir Philip used these very figures from Adam's Reports? And if he has, how is it that he arrives at a different conclusion?" The reply to that question is: "No, Sir Philip has not included in his calculations all the figures supplied by Adam." On a reference to Appendix B, it will be noticed that Adam has six categories of "instructed" adults. Sir Philip has omitted to include the sixth category of instructed adults as literates. He appears to think that Adam was not right in regarding as "instructed" those who could "merely decipher or sign their names". Sir Philip is here defining literacy from the modern viewpoint and that we submit is not a correct method of comparing literacy statistics of two periods with a long interval of 100 years between them.

In trying to compare the statistical data of literacy as found in Adam's Reports with those of modern times, in India, it is necessary to remember that 'literacy' cannot have identical connotation in 1840 and 1940. The modern definition of a literate person according to the Indian census standard (adopted in 1911) is: *One who can read and*

---

originally conceived, Adam's enquiry was to be confined to the Bengal tracts only. In 1836 he repaired to Calcutta and was detained there by some 'other duty' for about five months, till the end of January 1837. Suddenly he received orders to proceed to Bihar in prosecution of the inquiry into the native education of that Province. He was asked to confine his inquiry to only two districts of Bihar—Gaya district of South Bihar and Tirhoot district of North Bihar. He completed his inquiry of these districts in about five months, from February to June 1837, and returned to Calcutta to write his report (Long, p. 44). Both these districts of Bihar were the most sparsely populated districts which Adam had to survey. The two Thanas of Bihar Jahanabad and Bhawara—contained together 1,205 villages as against 738 of the three Thanas surveyed by him in the Bengal area. The thought and the care which Adam could bestow on the enquiry of the Bengal units could not possibly be spared by him for these two Bihar units. In his survey of the Thana of Bhawara in the South Bihar district which contained as many as 805 villages, it seems, Adam did not get proper assistance from the Magistrate of the district, and in expressing his thanks for assistance, Adam omits to mention the Magistrate of that district (Long, p. 145).

6. An obvious discrepancy has been allowed to creep into the above discussion, because it could not be avoided. Adam has given figures for instructed adults above 14 years while the figures for literates in the census reports are for persons above 15 years. It is not possible to obtain the number of "instructed adults" in Adam's time above 15 years, nor do the census returns supply figures for literates above 14 years. The discrepancy, therefore, could not be avoided; nor was it possible to suggest corrections to make the two sets of figures exactly comparable. The same difficulty appeared in comparing the figures of *all* literates. It is assumed that all children of 5 + who were in Adam's time attending school might be regarded as literates. That is obviously not a correct supposition. But it is difficult to say what particular correction would counteract this error.

But the discrepancies, in our opinion, do not materially affect the conclusion. Moreover, it will be shown hereafter that Adam's figures of school-going children and instructed adults were incomplete and were under-estimates. That was particularly so in regard to his figures of pupils under domestic instruction; and these factors more than compensate any effect which the above discrepancies may have on the conclusion.

write a letter. Adam's sixth category consists of adults "*who can merely decipher or sign their names*" and, therefore, Adam's definition of an 'instructed' or, as we would now call him, a 'literate' person is one whose minimum qualification is the ability to merely decipher or sign his name. In comparing the literacy statistics given in Adam's Report with those of the present day, Sir Philip Hartog has not taken into account the figures given by Adam in his sixth category of the 'instructed' adults, because in his opinion a person who is reported to be *able to merely read or write* cannot now be considered as literate.

It seems to us that it is not fair to exclude the figures of Adam's sixth category of instructed adults in comparing the statistics of literacy of his time with those of the present day. It is very significant that at the time of his inquiry (1835-38) Adam thought it desirable and necessary to include this group among the 'instructed' and all along in his Reports he has included this group in ascertaining the literacy attainments of the population surveyed by him. Further, it must be noted that Adam was not quite sure whether the persons counted by him in this sixth group were not also able to read and write. For Adam wrote of this group as 'those who can either sign their names or read imperfectly, or perhaps can do both'. (Long, p. 136.)

Printed books were not available in large numbers at the time of Adam's enquiry and Adam was justified in taking the whole of the sixth group as 'literate' or 'instructed'. We shall be getting a wrong idea of literacy percentage of Adam's days if we omit that group from our calculation. For it will be seen that we shall then be excluding 33% of Adam's figure. Literacy attainments of a society should be judged from the general requirements of that society from time to time. Persons enumerated by Adam in his sixth group had a definite function to fulfil as 'instructed' or 'literate' persons in the Indian society of the time. A person in those old times remained under instruction only to the extent which enabled him to acquire what he wanted. And if his wants were confined to mere reading or writing or perhaps both, surely he must be treated, as Adam has treated him, as an 'instructed' person when he had acquired that ability. Adam who grouped the 'instructed' adults into six well-marked categories, would have certainly omitted the last category, had he felt that the persons enumerated in that category had no place in the society of the time as 'instructed' persons. But they were as good products of the educational system of the time as the 'literate' persons of the present day are and to eliminate them from the literacy figures of that time, would be wrong. In comparing century-old social standards with those of the present times, we must make due allowances for the social wants of those times and now. It may be noted that even in modern times a lower standard for 'literacy'—*ability to read and write*—was considered enough till the year 1911; and yet when comparing the figures

of 1911 and later years with those of 1881, 1891 and 1901 we do not think of excluding certain groups from among the literates of 1881, 1891 or 1901. Adam's statistics should receive the same treatment.

III. THE VALUE OF ADAM'S FIGURES

India owes a debt of gratitude to Adam, for collecting general information and statistics of the state of education in those distant days and thus affording an opportunity for later generations to know something definitely about Indian education of pre-British times. His was the first systematic census of literacy in India. In the words of Sir Philip Hartog, "Adam's own reports reveal a man of wide sympathies and knowledge, of practical ability and shrewdness, intellectually honest, and capable of facing unwelcome facts and of envisaging clearly the many-sidedness and the difficulties of the problem he had offered to tackle."[7] But it must be realised that Adam worked under certain difficulties and limitations and, on that account, the statistical portions of his reports are not as valuable as the descriptive ones. His statistics, particularly those of the instructed adults and of children in schools and under domestic instruction could indicate only the minimum. Adam's figures could not possibly reach the stage of perfection of those of the census returns of recent years, which are carefully collected by Government with the help of an efficient and organised agency and an army of enumerators who go from house to house in every nook and corner of India. The greatest limitation which Adam had to face in his investigations was inadequacy of time. For a general survey of one thana in a district with an average population of over a million souls and a detailed survey of one thana in a district with an average of about 300 villages in the Bengal area (and 600 in the Bihar area) Adam was able to devote on an average only two months. Considering the crude conveyances available in those days, it could be imagined how Adam's figures could not possibly record all that was worth recording in order to describe the real state of things. Some light is thrown on the extent of this defect of the enquiry when we take note of certain statements made by Adam himself in the course of his Reports.

Speaking of the thana of Doulatbazar, Adam writes: "The most improved mode of investigation to which I had attained in Rajashahi, in respect both of the agents and forms employed, was applied to this thana; but the result disappointed me; for I found, at the close of the enquiry, that there was not (reported) a single Sanskrit or Arabic school in the Doulatbazar thana, although existence of such institutions in the district was undoubted." (Long, p. 148.)

---

7. Some Aspects of Indian Education, p. 75.

Then again with reference to his personal visit to villages, Adam says: "The sudden appearance of a European in a village often inspired terror which it was always difficult and sometimes impossible to subdue. The most influential or the best informed inhabitant was sometimes absent, and it required much labour to enable others to comprehend the object of my visit." (Long, p. 150.)

Referring to the census taken under his supervision, Adam says: ". . . the discrepancy in the returns of males and females between fourteen and five years of age, that is, the much less number of females than of males of that age, seems to prove that concealment was systematically practised." (Long, p. 150.)

Writing about the agency employed, Adam observes: "The efficiency of such agency must depend on the efficiency of the supervision to which it is subjected; but although I laboured to render my superintendence vigilant and searching and although I believe that the returns I received are in general worthy of confidence as far as they go, yet I have no security that they are not defective. In traversing a district my agents could not visit all the villages contained, amounting to several thousands. This was physically impossible without protracting enquiry beyond all reasonable limits. They were, therefore, compelled to depend either upon their personal knowledge or upon the information that could be gathered from others as to the places possessing schools, every one of which was invariably visited and examined. But that in no instance a village institution has been overlooked is more than what I can affirm, and in point of fact I have sometimes discovered instances in which such institutions at first escaped attention. I have thought it right to show that this source of error did exist; but I believe that such oversights still remaining undetected are, if any, very few." (Long, pp. 150-151.)

But the most important observation of Adam throwing powerful searchlight on his survey of indigenous elementary schools is in the following lines: "On other occasions teachers both of common schools and schools of learning, from some misapprehension, have concealed themselves to escape the dreaded inquisition." (Long, p. 151.)

Suspicion with which such an enquiry was looked upon by the people was not a peculiarity of Adam's enquiry. It persisted for many more years in no milder intensity. The Hon'ble Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, while giving evidence before the Indian Education Commission of 1882 (The Hunter Commission), said with reference to the reported number of indigenous schools in the sixties of the last century: "I remember that at the time when inquiries as to the number in indigenous schools were being conducted, a great misconception had arisen in the minds of the people regarding the object of the proceedings. Some of them used to

detain their children from going to school, while teachers were invariably in the habit of giving less numbers than what they actually were." (Appendix to the Report of the Indian Education Commission, N.-W. Province and Oudh, p. 283.)

It has not been possible to collect the statistics about indigenous educational institutions in India with a fair amount of reliability even in later years. They have been, as a rule, highly under-estimated. An excellent example of this is supplied in the Punjab enquiry conducted in connection with the Indian Educational Commission of 1882. At first the Educational Department of the Punjab had estimated that the number of indigenous schools and of scholars learning in them, in the Province of the Punjab in 1879, were 4,662 and 53,027 respectively. The figures being challenged by Dr. Leitner, Principal of the Government College, Lahore, who had himself conducted an inquiry in this field, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab ordered a fresh enquiry; and as a result of it, it was found that the numbers of the indigenous schools and their pupils were 13,109 and 135,384 respectively.[8] The new estimate of the number of schools was nearly three times and that of their scholars two and a half times the number at first reported.

The under-estimation was not necessarily due to the carelessness or indifference of those who were charged with the enquiry. It was, to a great extent, due to certain conditions under which schools in those days worked. In fact it was impossible to obtain a correct count of those schools in a hurried inquiry. Often 'schools' were not permanent institutions. They were opened and closed, in most cases, according to the needs of particular localities. Their locations were shifted to suit the convenience of the teachers and pupils. At times, they were kept open for a part of the year only, the master following some other occupation for the rest of the time for eking out his livelihood. Some schools were kept open during the rainy season and others during the cold season only, when the children had little work to do at home and could spend a few hours per day at school. Such being the conditions under which the indigenous schools of old times worked, only a very patient and careful enquiry with the fullest co-operation of local residents could give results with some semblance of completeness. There is nothing to show that Adam was particularly favoured with such co-operation and therefore his estimates of indigenous schools and their pupils were bound to be under-estimates. The same could also be said of his figures of instructed adults. If even teachers thought it fit to conceal themselves from the dreaded enquiry,[9] what chance was there to secure a correct count of *all* "instructed adults?"

---

8. *Report of the Indian Education Commission of 1882*—Note by the President, Sir William Hunter, p. 621.

9. Long, p. 151.

What the extent of this under-estimation was cannot be ascertained definitely. But it was big enough to make one admit that Mahatma Gandhi stated only the truth when he said that India was more literate a hundred years ago than now (i.e. between 1911-20).

IV. DOMESTIC INSTRUCTION, A SOURCE OF LITERACY

In pre-British days domestic instruction, i.e. instruction provided at home instead of in a school was a powerful factor in the spread of elementary education and Adam seems to have recognised the important place of it in the educational system of his time. From his figures, however, one is led to think that for every two children learning in 'schools', only one was taught at home or under domestic roof. (*Vide* Appendix C.) It was possible to know at least approximately the correct number of children attending 'school'. But to know even approximately, the number of pupils under instruction at home, either taught by a relative or by a paid private tutor, was an inherently difficult task and it must have been much more so, when, as mentioned by Adam himself, his enquiry was met by the people with suspicion regarding the *bona fides* of the inquirer. And the question arises: "What could be the correct ratio of Adam's estimate of children under domestic instruction to the number of those actually under such instruction?"

In the pre-British period and even for some decades in the early British period, elementary education—reading, writing and arithmetic—was mostly imparted to children, under the domestic roof. The schools which are enumerated by Adam and other investigators before or after him, no doubt were there. But an account of the indigenous system of elementary education of those distant times and the extent of literacy among the people, would not only be imperfect but positively misleading, if only the schools and their pupils are taken as the basis of our calculations. Adam did appreciate this fact and did take into consideration also the number of pupils under 'domestic instruction'. And he was perhaps the only investigator of educational statistics of the time who had understood its importance. In other parts of India, similar investigations were undertaken by officers of Government even before Adam took up his enquiry; but they were either ignorant of this extramural agency or did not, like Adam, realise its full significance in promoting literacy in India, in those days. It was particularly so in Bombay and Madras. The result of the failure of these investigators to note the number of pupils under domestic instruction has been that those who relied only upon the figures of pupils in schools and tried to draw from them a picture of the extent of indigenous education in India of those days unwittingly obtained a wrong picture.

One may even go further and say that in pre-British days, domestic instruction was the main agency which imparted elementary instruction to the children of the soil. Compared to it school-instruction was of small account. And sufficient confirmation of this is available in the writings of those times.

Adam himself has given in his Reports a glimpse of the strength and volume of domestic instruction in the districts surveyed by him. Writing about the district of Rangpur, from the account given by others before him, Adam observes: "In some of the sub-divisions having no common schools, parents, to supply the want of them, either employ teachers in their own houses in whose instruction the children of neighbouring families are allowed to participate, or themselves instruct their own children. The employment of a private tutor and, still more, parental instruction would appear to be very common." (Long, p. 71.)

About the district of Dinajpur, Adam writes: "Even these small fees are beyond the reach of the bulk of the people, so that, were not many parents at pains to instruct their own children, very few would be able to read and write." (Long, p. 73.)

About the district of Purneah, Adam says: "A large proportion of the children of the district are taught to read and write by their parents." (Long, p. 79.)

While surveying the thana of Nattore in Rajshahi district Adam found: "The proportion of those who receive elementary instruction at home to those who receive it in schools is thus as 1000 to 109.9" or nearly 10 : 1." (Long, p. 109.)

Of the same thana of Nattore, Adam further writes: "It thus appears that, in addition to the elementary instruction given in regular schools, there is a sort of traditionary knowledge of written language and accounts preserved in families from father to son and from generation to generation. This domestic instruction is much more in use than scholastic elementary education." (Long, p. 110.)

One peculiarity of the indigenous educational system of the pre-British period was that those who aspired to higher learning, the knowledge of Sanskrit language and literature, did not, as a rule, receive their elementary education in the common schools. In fact two systems, elementary and higher, seemed to thrive independently of each other; one providing elementary instruction to those who aimed at higher learning and the other providing elementary instruction to those who did not entertain that aim. The former was mostly provided at home; the latter was provided both at home and in schools. The pupils of the common elementary schools seldom took to higher learning. When they left school they entered into life straightaway. Adam writes:

"The instruction in Bengali and Hindi reading and writing, which is necessary at the commencement of a course of Sanskrit study, is seldom acquired in the vernacular schools, but generally under the domestic roof." (Long, p. 196.)

Adam further enumerates the following classes of people as giving domestic instruction to their children: Zamindars and Talookdars, Shopkeeprs and Traders, Gomashtas and Mandals, Pandits and Priests. But of these, Pandits and Priests constituted the largest section. (Long, p. 234.)

It would also appear that Kayasthas (the writer class) did not send their children to common schools in such numbers as would be expected from their population in a locality. This was particularly noticed by Adam in the districts of South Bihar and Tirhoot. He found that in the 285 single-teacher schools, in the district of South Bihar there were 278 Kayastha teachers; and yet the number of Kayastha pupils in the schools of that district was only 220. Surely, a community which could give 278 teachers had more than 220 pupils of school-going age and willing to learn. Adam noticed this disparity and observed: "That small number of Kayastha scholars contrasts with the almost exclusive possession by that caste of the business of vernacular teaching." (Long, p. 172.) The Kayastha community which largely supplied teachers of the common schools, appeared to favour domestic instruction for their sons, to that in the common schools.

In short, from the information supplied by Adam himself it is evident that almost all castes and communities which valued literacy, if not also higher learning, had an instinctive preference for domestic instruction for their children. It could, therefore, be justifiably inferred that the number of children under domestic instruction must have been many times that in the common schools of the time. Adams' figures indicating that there was one child under domestic instruction to two under school instruction could, on his own admissions elsewhere in his Reports, not be the real state of things. Admissions suggesting wider existence of domestic instruction as compared to school instruction, also in other parts of India, are made in the reports of officials and others who conducted educational surveys some years before Adam, but, unlike Adam, they failed to realise the full significance of domestic instruction in promoting literacy.

In Madras under the direction of Sir Thomas Munroe, an educational survey was made and reported upon, in or about 1824. The Collector of the Canara district did not supply any figures and in support of his action he wrote: "In Canara education is conducted so much in private that any statement of the number of private schools and of the scholars attending them, would be of little or no use, but on the contrary, rather fallacious, in forming an estimate of the

proportion of the population receiving instruction." (Minutes, p. 415.) Although conditions in other districts were probably similar to those in Canara, the ability of the Collector of Canara to correctly interpret the value of statistical data was not shared by the Collectors of other Districts in the Province and they submitted figures of schools, colleges and their pupils as they could get them. (Minutes, p. 414.) No figures were supplied of pupils under "domestic instruction" by any but the Collector of the District of Madras, and his figures disclosed that in a population of 462,000, there were 5,236 pupils in schools and 26,903 pupils under domestic instruction, i.e. out of every 6 pupils under instruction in the district, 5 were under domestic instruction and 1 under school instruction.[10]

Had the Collector of Canara like the Collector of the District of Madras supplied figures of pupils receiving instruction both under the domestic roof and in schools, probably a similar set of figures would have been submitted by him. Sir Thomas Munroe was naturally surprised at this finding of the Collector of the District of Madras but, instead of demanding re-checking of the figures, he statisfied himself with the observation that "there is probably some error in this number of pupils under domestic instruction" and that "though the number privately taught in the Province does certainly not approach this rate, it is no doubt considerable, because the practice of boys being taught at home by their parents or private teachers is not unfrequent in any part of the country". (Minutes, p. 506.)

In a statistical report prepared by an officer who was for many years East India Company's Resident at the Court of the Raja of Nagpur, after giving some figures about pupils in schools in some parts of the Raja's territory, he writes: "Private tuition is gratuitously conveyed to a still greater number of children (than those who go to schools) by the Brahmins, Vidoors or village Pandits." (Minutes, p. 455.)

From the above extracts, it will be clear that Adam's estimate of the proportion of children under domestic instruction to those in schools (1 : 2) was far below the number which could be reasonably expected, if his figures for children in schools be taken as fairly correct. The number of children under domestic instruction were at least equal to, if not many times greater than, that of the children under school instruction.

Had Adam been able to appraise correctly the number of children under domestic instruction in the area surveyed by him, the literacy percentage of his time would have been found to be substantially greater than what is otherwise shown by his figures.

10. Compare Adam's observation, Long, p. 169.

V. INDIAN EDUCATION WAS DECLINING IN ADAM'S TIME

Besides the probable under-estimation of the numbers of children under instruction and of ' instructed ' adults, for reasons already discussed, there is yet another aspect to be considered which will show that the literacy figures would have been more than what they were found by Adam, had he undertaken his enquiry two or three decades earlier. Wrote Adam: " At Pundua, a place formerly of some celebrity in the district (Hugly), it is said to have been the practice of the Musalman land-proprietors to entertain teachers at their own private cost, for the benefit of the children of the poor in their neighbourhood, *and it was a rare thing to find an opulent farmer or head of a village who had not a teacher in his employment for that purpose. That class, however, is alleged to have dwindled away and scarcely any such schools are now found to exist.*"[11] (Long, p. 40.)

Referring to the district and town of Dacca, Adam writes: " From these statements, and from the preceding account of the depressed state of the principal manufacture (production of fine cotton fabrics) of the district, it may be inferred that popular instruction is at a very low ebb." (Long, p. 56.)

Adam further observes: " Inability to pay for school instruction I believe to be by far the most prevalent reason (of schools being closed), and that is confirmed by the fact that, in at least six villages that I visited, I was told that there had been recently Bengali schools which were discontinued, because the masters could not gain a livelihood or because they found something more profitable to do elsewhere. . . . From all I could learn and observe, I am led to infer that in this district (Rajshahi) *elementary instruction is on the decline and has been some time past decaying.*"[12] (Long, p. 111.)

The above extracts from Adam's Reports clearly show that from what he saw and heard Adam felt that at the time of his enquiry education in India was on the decline. The inference could not, therefore, be open to a challenge that the number of literates in India was greater some years before the time of Adam's enquiry (1836) and *ipso facto* before 1921.[13]

That indigenous education in India was on the decline at the time of Adam's enquiry gains support also from the evidence available in other parts of India. In 1826, it was reported that " in the town of Panipat, there are several ill-supported and thinly attended schools, which appear to have had their origin with some respectable individuals, and to have deteriorated year after year, *since the introduction of the British rule.*"[12] (Minutes, pp. 445-46.)

11. Italics are mine—R. V. P. 12. Italics are mine—R. V. P.
13. See tables on pages 7-9. (This Volume pp. 217-218.)

A. D. Campbell, the Collector of the Bellary District in the Province of Madras, in 1823, writes: "In many villages where formerly there were schools, there are none now, and in many others where there were large schools, now only a few children of the most opulent are taught, others being unable from poverty to attend or to pay what is demanded." (Minutes, p. 503.)

Assigning reasons for the inability of the village people to meet the expenses of education of their children, Campbell further observes: "I am sorry to state that this is ascribed to the gradual but general impoverishment of the country. The means of manufacturing classes have been of late years greatly diminished by the introduction of our own European manufacturers in lieu of Indian cotton fabrics. The removal of many of our troops from our own territories to the distant frontiers of our newly subsidised allies has also of late years affected the demand for grain. The transfer of the capital of the country from the native Governments and their officers who liberally expended it in India, to Europeans restricted by law from employing it even temporarily in India and daily draining it from the land, has likewise tended to this effect which has not yet been alleviated by a less rigid enforcement of the revenue due to the State. The greater part of the middling and lower classes of the people are now unable to defray expenses incident upon the education of their offspring, while their necessities require assistance of their children as soon as their tender limbs are capable of the smallest labour." (Minutes, p. 503.)

Had some enthusiast like Adam collected statistics of the literacy of India at the time when indigenous education was not much affected by the advent of the British rule and consequent economic dislocation, as pointed out by Campbell, there would have been no need of presenting indirect evidence to show that there were more literates in India in 1821 than in 1921, i.e. after a century of British rule. Even the returns of schools and the pupils attending them, apart from those under domestic instruction, would have sufficed to prove the correctness of Mahatma Gandhi's statement.

VI. PARADOX EXPLAINED

It has been so far shown that, even from the figures supplied by Adam, one can see that the literacy percentage in India in 1840 was slightly higher than that in 1911 and almost equal to that in 1921. It is further shown that the figures supplied by Adam were, in all probability, incomplete and therefore under-estimates. Again, in Adam's time a much larger number than that of those attending schools, received instructions at home and it was impossible for Adam to obtain a correct estimate of that number. Lastly, it has been pointed out that even in Adam's time indigenous education, deprived as it was

of any Government support, was already declining. If all these factors be properly appreciated it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that India has not attained even now the literacy which existed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. But in spite of all the evidence marshalled in the preceding pages, many persons will be unwilling to accept the conclusion which was voiced by Mahatma Gandhi in his speech in London. How, they will ask, could literacy in India be greater a hundred years ago than now? How could it be greater when education was not organised, when it was imparted by voluntary agencies, than when it is the care of organised Departments of Education? They are unaware that the capacity of the present-day elementary schools to send out literates is very much restricted by the fact that a number of children leave school for good, within a year or two after their admission, and that a number are detained every year in the lower classes owing to their failure to cross the artificial bars of 'standards' now imposed on the system. It is well known that, in India, more than 50 per cent of the pupils in the first-year class (Infants class) are detained in that class; and as a result they either leave school for good or have to repeat the same class for another year. This has been going on almost uninterruptedly since the institution of regular standards, for over 75 years. Hence, the present-day schools send out a proportionately smaller number of literates from among the number of pupils that join schools. In the pre-British days, under the indigenous system, elementary schools did not have any 'standards' or 'classes'. Pupils joined schools or received instruction at home because their parents wanted them to learn whatever was taught to them. There were no formal examinations to pass and consequently no detention. Wastage in the sense that a child has to give up instruction before he is able to read and write did not exist in the old system, because a great majority of the children left school only when they acquired the skill and knowledge which was considered necessary for their future careers. Some left early after learning only to read and count; others left after they had learnt the three R's, and acquired a certain amount of general knowledge and proficiency in handwriting; each working according to his own capacity and requirement. No doubt the range of instruction in these schools was limited if compared with that of the instruction imparted in our present-day elementary schools with their official syllabus requiring the study of a number of subjects; but it should be noted that the spread of literacy is not necessarily dependent on the quality of instruction imparted in a school. In fact undue emphasis on quality may be antagonistic to the spread of literacy and outside the official circles the view is held that the Departments of Education in India have neglected the spread of literacy, the ideal of giving minimum education to all, obsessed as they have been with the ideal of efficient schooling, with the result that in respect of literacy, India has continued to be where she was a

hundred years ago. In 1840, the indigenous educational system which had then ceased to receive Government support, provided higher education to a few and the minimum necessary to as many as needed it. Disorganised as they were and entirely dependent on private enterprise, the indigenous schools could not do more. The British system which has replaced the indigenous system of a hundred years ago has given India better schools and richer instruction, but have brought in their train an enormously slow spread of literacy. Mahatma Gandhi probably wanted to emphasise this defect in the modern educational system and whatever Sir Philip may think of Mahatmaji's statement, there is little doubt that he voiced in his London speech views which are largely shared by the Indian people.

When estimating the value of schools for the spread of literacy in the pre-British period and at the present time, the easy passage of a pupil from stage to stage unrestricted by examinations and according to his capacity of learning and his goal in attending school, prevalent in the pre-British period must be taken into account. If with three per cent of its population in the present-day elementary schools, a Province could claim a literacy of about 8 per cent in 1921, with the same or even a lesser percentage of population under elementary instruction, in 1821, without restriction of standards, the indigenous schools could easily claim a higher percentage of literates or 'instructed' persons. This is indeed the crux of the problem and there lies the solution of the apparent paradox.

In order to give a vivid idea of how elementary instruction was carried on in those days in India, the following extract from the Report of the Bombay Education Society, for 1817 (pp. 20-22), may be quoted:

"When a boy joins the school he is immediately put under the tuition and care of one who is more advanced in knowledge and whose duty it is to give lessons to his young pupil, to assist him in learning and to report his behaviour and progress to the master. The scholars are not classed but are generally paired off, each pair consisting of an instructor and a pupil. These pairs are so arranged that a boy less advanced may sit next to one who has made greater progress and from whom he receives assistance and instruction. When, however, several of the older boys have made considerable and nearly equal progress, they are seated together in one line and receive their instruction directly from the master; by these means the master has sufficient leisure to exercise vigilant superintendence over the school and of enquiring into the progress made by each pupil under instruction."

The above mode of instruction precluded or at least very greatly minimised the effects of stagnation and wastage, and as the average number of pupils in 'schools' of the time was also small (often less

than 30) the system helped in sending out literates or 'instructed' persons in a much greater proportion. Besides, as the number of pupils under domestic instruction was at least as great as, if not more than, that of those under school instruction, this process of sending out literates worked far more successfully in the aggregate than the present system where stagnation and wastage restrict the output of literates compared to the total number of pupils under elementary instruction. Granting, therefore, for the sake of argument that the percentage of pupils under elementary instruction to the total population was less in the pre-British time than at present, there is little doubt that the output of literates in the indigenous system of instruction was much more than now as it was not subjected to the influences of wastage and stagnation.

That the indigenous schools made a great contribution proportionately to literacy than the schools conducted or controlled by the British Departments of Education, will be more evident by studying the case of Burma which even today has retained most of its indigenous schools as they had existed in the land before it passed into British hands. The situation may well be described by quoting here the following excerpts from *Literacy in India*:[14]

"In Burma, there is a large number of monastic schools conducted in temples by Buddhist monks and priests in which from old times, a large number of children has been receiving a sort of primary education consisting mainly of three R's. During recent years, some of these monastic or temple schools have been brought into the official system of primary education by aiding and recognising them. Such schools follow in some respects the officially prescribed curricula. But there are many monastic schools which do not conform to the Government rules and they carry on their work of teaching children in their own way. The importance of these unrecognised monastic schools—however imperfect they may be according to the prescribed standards—can be realised when it is seen that the number of children under instruction in these schools in 1934-35 was about 200,000, while the number of children learning in all recognised primary schools was 284,000. These monastic schools are so widely spread that they reach 20,000 out of 32,000 villages in Burma. The schools recognised by Government number about 4,500. The effect of this has been that Burma has been able to add in the decade 1921-30, new literates to the extent of about 19 lakhs in its population of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ crore, although according to the usual calculations the recognised primary schools would have been able to add new literates numbering about 3 lakhs only. The indigenous schools are, therefore, a great asset to Burma in promoting literacy.

14. *Literacy in India* (pp. 40-41) by R. V. Parulekar, published by Macmillan and Co.

"The unrecognised monastic schools retain their pupils for two or three years, within which time they become literate according to the census standard. They have not to pass examinations nor follow a rigidly prescribed course of instruction consisting of the usual staple of a recognised primary school. There is no need for detaining pupils in the same class because of their failure to pass a test; for there are no classes; the school as a whole is one class, each pupil doing his own work according to his ability. There may be very little 'wastage' because the schools are people's schools and the people themselves send the children, of their own accord. That is why these twenty thousand schools are able to send out such a large number of literates. This would be absolutely impossible if the usual stagnation and wastage factors were to operate in these schools. The situation can be explained only on one supposition, viz. that every child who enters a monastic school leaves it in a couple of years after attaining literacy as required by the census standard."

This is best illustrated by the following tabular statement showing the spread of literacy in India and Burma:

		1911	1921	1931
1.	Population of Burma (in lakhs) ..	121	132	147
2.	Population of British India, excluding Burma (in lakhs)	2322	2338	2568
3.	Literates in Burma (in lakhs) ..	27	37	46
4.	Literates in British India, excluding Burma (in lakhs)	126	148	179
5.	Literacy Percentage in Burma ..	22.3	28.0	31.3
6.	Literacy Percentage in British India, excluding Burma	5.4	6.3	6.9

The population of India is about 18 times that of Burma; but the addition of literates in 20 years, from 1911 to 1931, in India was barely three times that in Burma. The superiority of Burma over India in respect of literacy is generally admitted to be due to the presence of indigenous schools; they have given the Province 31.3 per cent literacy when British India has only 6.9 per cent.

The monastic schools in Burma are the descendants of the indigenous schools in existence in that country before the Province was conquered by the British. The indigenous schools in India, in and before

Adam's time, were not dissimilar to those in Burma. The Burmese schools are supported by temples; the indigenous schools in India were supported by the villagers. But these latter were as effective in spreading literacy and imparting the minimum of education sought by their pupils.

It is not the purpose of this paper to condemn the educational administration of India in the British period as bad in every respect or to praise the indigenous system of education which existed in India a hundred years ago as good in every way. Even the most violent critic of the British Government will admit that modern educational institutions in India have been a great contribution of the British people towards the uplift of the country. But even a great blessing may have its defects. A white elephant may be a valuable gift or a source of anxiety according to the resources of the presentee. The modern primary schools have been valuable institutions from the educational viewpoint; but they have hindered rather than helped the spread of literacy, with the result that in this respect the country has made no advance since the days of Adam. It is even held that India is at present less literate than she was a hundred years ago, and the view is based on good foundations. The wholesale replacement of indigenous schools by schools conducted or aided by the Education Department was not a wise step; and the contention of Indian leaders has been that if the British Government had recognised this fact early enough and not allowed the indigenous schools to decay and disappear for want of State support, British India would have shown a much better literacy figure today.

APPENDIX A

POPULATION

Tracts Surveyed	District in which the Survey tract was situated	Bengal or Bihar	Population	Children below 5	Children between 5 & 14	Persons above 14 (adults)
City of Moorshedabad	Moorshedabad	Bengal ..	124,804	11,894	15.092	97,818
Thana Daulatbazar ..	—do—	Bengal ..	62,027	8,772	10,428	42,827
Thana Nanglia ..	Beerbhoom ..	Bengal ..	46,416	7,077	8,929	30,410
Thana Culna ..	Burdwan ..	Bengal ..	116,125	17,204	18,176	81,045
Thana Jehanabad ..	South Bihar ..	Bihar ..	81,480	8,312	15,595	57,573
Thana Bhawara ..	Tirhoot ..	Bihar ..	65,812	7,987	13.409	44,416
Total ..			496,964	61,246	81,629	354,089

APPENDIX B

ADULT INSTRUCTION

—	City of Murshidabad	Thana Daulat Bazar	Thana Nanglia	Thana Culna	Thana Jehanabad	Thana Bhawara	Total of last six columns
1. Adults who have received a learned education and are engaged in the business of teaching ..	33	..	2	38	6	7	86
2. Adults who have received a learned education and who are *not* engaged in the business of teaching ..	75	13	12	99	19	27	245
3. Adults who have *not* received a learned education and who are engaged in the business of teaching with attainments superior to a mere knowledge of reading and writing ..	60	25	34	93	53	6	271
4. Adults who have neither received a learned education nor are engaged in the business of teaching but who possess attainments superior to a mere knowledge of reading and writing ..	4767	555	352	2424	992	425	9515
5. Adults who can merely read and write ..	1700	614	593	2304	761	303	6275
6. Adults who can merely decipher or sign their names ..	715	565	620	2350	1004	265	5519
Total ..	7350	1772	1613	7308	2835	1033	21911

APPENDIX C

CHILDREN (5-14) UNDER INSTRUCTION

—	No. of children receiving school instruction	No. of children receiving domestic instruction	Total No. of children under instruction
City of Murshidabad ..	959	300	1,259
Thana Doulatbazar ..	305	326	631
Thana Nanglia ..	439	385	824
Thana Culna ..	2,243	676	2,919
Thana Jahanabad ..	366	539	905
Thana Bhawara ..	60	288	348
Total ..	4,372	2,514	6,886

APPENDIX D

100,000 Schools in Bengal and Bihar

"Indigenous Elementary Schools are those schools in which instruction in the elements of knowledge is communicated, and which have been originated and are supported by the Natives themselves, in contradistinction from those that are supported by Religious and Philanthropic Societies. The number of such schools in Bengal is supposed to be very great. A distinguished member of the General Committee of Public Instruction in a minute on the subject expressed the opinion that if one rupee per mensem were expended on each existing village school in the Lower Provinces (i.e. Bengal and Bihar), the amount would probably fall little short of 12 lakhs of Rupees per annum. This supposes that there are 100,000 such schools in Bengal and Bihar, and assuming the population of these two Provinces to be 40,000,000 there would be a village school for every 400 persons. . . . The estimate of 100,000 such schools in Bengal and Bihar is confirmed by a consideration of the number of villages in these two Provinces. Their number has been officially estimated at 150,748, of which not all but most have each a school. If it be admitted that there is so large a proportion as a third of the villages that have no schools, there will still be 100,000 that have them."—*Adam's Reports edited by Long*, p. 18.

INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS IN INDIA : THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO MASS LITERACY

100,000 Schools in Bengal and Bihar—

In 1931 when Mr. M. K. Gandhi was in London, in connexion with the Round Table Conference on Indian Affairs, he delivered a speech in which he is reported to have said : "Today India is more illiterate than she was fifty or a hundred years ago, because the British administrators, when they came to India instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out." We have not the whole of Mr. Gandhi's speech before us and we cannot, therefore, guess, from this short extract from his speech, whether he made that statement as an indictment implying wilful destruction of indigenous schools by British Government or whether it was only a more forceful presentation of the mistake alleged to have been committed by the British administrators in replacing the indigenous system by one which was foreign to the soil. Sir Philip Hartog apparently interpreted the statement as an indictment of wilful neglect and published three memoranda, as an addendum to his recent publication. *Some Aspects of Indian Education, Past and Present*, the chief purpose of the memoranda being "to remove, if possible, once for all, the imaginary bases for assertions not infrequently made in India that the British Government systematically destroyed the indigenous system of elementary schools and with it a literacy which the schools are presumed to have created".

One of the "imaginary bases" which Sir Philip is out to remove, is the statement of William Adam, the Christian Missionary who, under instruction from Lord William Bentinck, undertook an educational survey of certain districts of Bengal and Bihar in the year 1835. That statement appears as Appendix D. On a careful perusal of it, it will be noticed that the statement, viz. there were about 100,000 schools in

Bengal and Bihar, in 1835, was really made by a distinguished member of the General Committee of Public Instruction and Adam examined its correctness by applying an independent test. "The estimate of 100,000 such schools in Bengal and Bihar is confirmed," says Adam, "by a consideration of the number of villages in those two Provinces. Their number has been officially estimated at 150,748 of which not all but most have each a school. If it be admitted that there is so large a proportion as a third of the villages that have no school, there will still be 100,000 that have them." Sir Philip has been at pains to demonstrate, from certain figures collected by him from Adam's Reports, that that statement could not be true, that it was more than mere exaggeration, that it was a legend. "As we have seen," says Sir Philip, "neither the preliminary figures which Adam collected, not his own investigations, give the slightest support to the legend of the 100,000 schools" and yet he is disturbed by the fact that "Adam himself, honest as the day, did not point this out, and stranger still, no one else has hitherto pointed it out; the legend has survived in official and unofficial quarters alike." Sir Philip Hartog explains this persistence of the alleged "legend" of 100,000 schools to the difficulty of collecting figures from the different parts of Adam's Reports to realise the legendary character of his statement. But if Sir Philip were to seek an explanation with an open mind, he would have hit upon the alternative that the so-called legend has survived because it was not a legend. An Indian village in pre-British days was a self-sufficient unit, and the farmers who owned the village supported the families of individuals who were useful to them as traders, artisans, mechanics. The school master who was often also the priest had an honoured place in this organisation and Adam was correct in his statement, viz. "most villages have each a school". In 1835 when he wrote his first report he was convinced that most villages had each a school and in his investigation in the next three years he did not discover anything to make him change his belief. There is, therefore, nothing strange in his silence over the statement. The officials of the time also had seen that "most villages have each a school" and there was no occasion for them to attribute any legendary character to Adam's statement. In fact the so-called "legend" of 100,000 schools in Bengal and Bihar had its origin not in Adam's Reports but in an observation of a "distinguished member of the General Committee of Public Instruction" who in 1835 was the best informed body, in matters educational.

—Not a Legend

But do Adam's own figures really contradict his statement regarding the presence of a lakh of schools in Bengal and Bihar? As Sir Philip has said, Adam does not present his figures in consolidated tables; one has to collect them from different parts of the book. It is also necessary to interpret them with the correct background. If that is done, it is seen that Adam's estimate was not outside the range of possibility. On the next page is a table of statistics prepared from the figures supplied by Adam. In column 4 of it are the figures of "schools" which Adam actually counted in his survey. Where a "school" was not possible, either because of the poverty of the people or smallness of the number of learners, the rich landlord of the village provided a centre of instruction at his home. He did it primarily for his own children, but also allowed others to take the benefit of it. Column 8

of the table gives the average number of pupils per school in each rural unit surveyed by Adam. The smallest of these schools had less than 4 pupils in the Thana of Jahanabad. A domestic centre of instruction corresponded to the smallest school and if the number of pupils under domestic instruction be divided by 4 we get the number of centres of domestic instruction. On a study of the table, therefore, we find that in a population of 372,170, there were 209 "schools" and 554 "domestic centres" or 763 schools in all. Calculated on this basis, for a population of 43,000,000, the number of schools would be about 87,000, a figure closely corresponding to Adam's estimate which has been dubbed a "legend" by Sir Philip. The so-called legend becomes a conceivable fact if one rightly understands the meaning of "school" of those days.

Statement showing statistics collected by Adam (Third Report) for Rural Areas

Thana	Population	Villages	Elementary schools	Pupils in elementary schools	Pupils under domestic instruction	Total No. of pupils under instruction	Average No. of pupils per school	No. of centres for domestic instruction at 4 pupils per centre	Total No. of centres for instruction
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Daulatbazar (Bengal) ..	62,037	183	25	305	326	631	12	82	107
Nanglia (Bengal) .	46,416	267	14	439	385	724	30	96	110
Culna (Bengal)..	116,425	288	79	2243	676	2919	28	169	248
Jehanabad (Bihar) ..	81,480	805	85	366	539	905	4	135	220
Bhawara (Bihar)	65,812	402	6	60	288	348	10	72	78
Grand Total ..	372,170	1945	209	3413	2214	5527	..	554	763

A Primary School in Every Village

In distant corners of the country, far away from towns and bigger villages, there may be a few village schools of the old type still surviving. But they have mostly disappeared; in towns and bigger villages on account of the appearance of modern schools with paid teachers, and in smaller villages because of the poverty of the villagers. Officials and publicists who belong to this century and who have no personal knowledge of the educational conditions of the country in the middle half of the nineteenth century are unwilling to believe that there ever were schools in villages where the modern Departments of Education find it impossible to maintain them. They cannot conceive of simple instructional centres maintained by the villagers jointly or by rich

landlords individually, by paying the teachers in kind. But officials and non-officials who lived in fifties and sixties of the last centuries have, like Adam, admitted the existence of a school in every village. "At the beginning of the 19th century, there existed a fairly widespread organization for primary education in most parts of India. In Madras Presidency, Sir Thomas Munroe found "a primary school in every village" (Mill—*History of British India*, Vol. I, p. 562, fourth edition). In Bengal, Ward discovered that "almost all villages possessed schools for teaching reading, writing, and elementary arithmetic" (Ward—*View of the Hindoos*, Vol. I, p. 160). In Malva which was for more than half a century, suffering from continuous anarchy, Malcolm noticed that "every village with about a hundred houses had an elementary school at the time of its coming under the British suzerainty" (Malcolm—*Memoirs of Central India and Malva*, Vol. II, p. 158).

* * *

Destruction or Neglect?

In his article on "Literacy of India in pre-British Days", Mr. R. V. Parulekar has wisely confined his observations only to one part of Gandhiji's speech, viz. "India is more illiterate today than she was a hundred years ago." Even here Mr. Parulekar interprets *today* to mean 1921 rather than 1931 in which year the speech was delivered. Rapid strides have been taken in the last twenty years, in all Indian Provinces, and there has been, since 1921, an appreciable increase in the literacy percentage of India. Again it would perhaps not be a tenable proposition to say that India is more illiterate now than 50 years ago. The process of replacement of the unrecognised indigenous schools by the recognised schools of the modern type, which had started in or about 1840 was nearly completed by 1900; and by 1880 a stage was probably reached when the growth of recognised schools was not commensurate with the rapidity of the disappearance of the indigenous schools; perhaps India had then reached the lowest limit of literacy.

One would, again, not charge the British officials with deliberate destruction of indigenous schools. They neglected the indigenous schools probably in the belief that they were incapable of any improvement. Even those who regret their disappearance, would not vote for their revival in their old form. But this neglect has been generally regarded as a grievous error. The policy of setting up of State or State-aided schools as opposed to indigenous schools and throwing open to the pupils of the former schools all the material advantages which the State could afford to bestow, resulted in the speedy destruction of purely indigenous schools and domestic instruction centres. That led to the reduction of the numbers of scholars who used to receive rudimentary instruction under the indigenous system.

F. W. Thomas, in his *History and Prospect of British Education in India* (1891), however, appears to think that the British officials deliberately destroyed the indigenous schools and were glad that they were so destroyed:

"We estimated that in 1820 when the English system was but a drop in the ocean, about one in ten Hindu boys of the school-age was receiving instruction in schools of native origin and management. If that proportion were still maintained there would, in 1881-82, have been,

out of 254 million people of India (on Thomas Munroe's rough calculation), 1,400,000 boys receiving the same training. The State inquiry conducted in that year revealed as the actual number 350,000 or just one-fourth of what we should have anticipated. And though we cannot regard this total as complete, it is evident how largely native education has suffered from the State competition and that what was originally by far the more extensive system had now taken the second place.

"But what had become of the missing schools? They had disappeared in two different ways, by absorption and by extinction. In the north-west, Mr. Thomason's Tahsil and Halakhandi schools were not intended to rival the indigenous classes. But it was not long before the work of *destruction* [15] began and *the Director had frequent occasion for jubilation over the closing of now 600 and now 700 of these in the course of a year.*" [15]

In spite of the best wishes of the British Government to promote mass education in India, the actual procedure followed by the administrators was, undoubtedly, detrimental to its growth and expansion. F. W. Thomas referring to the numerous temple schools in Burma that existed and still exist in the Province, writes: "These schools continue to this day to prosper and in 1875, the Government officer observed that *the best educated districts of Burma were those which had been for the shortest time connected with the English.*" [15]

* * *

Contribution of Indigenous Schools to Mass Literacy

It is possible to pick out statements recorded at the time of or before Adam's enquiry which would show that the indigenous system of education in India had a wide sweep and that it did, in its own way, the work of mass education on a scale of which India may well be proud, even today.

In his letter dated the 2nd January 1835, addressed to Lord William Bentinck advocating the necessity of an enquiry into the state of education in Bengal, Adam wrote: "The institutions to which I refer will probably be found defective in their organization, narrow and contracted in their aim, and destitute of any principle of extension and improvement but of their existence the large body of literature in the country, the large body of learned men who hand it down from age to age, and the large proportion of the population that can read and write, are proofs." This was written by Adam before he undertook his inquiry and was based on his general observation and knowledge of Bengal after a long stay in the Province and an intimate acquaintance with its people. The fact that the subsequent statistical enquiry did not fully substantiate the statement does not lessen the importance of his opinion as Sir Philip Hartog appears to think. For Adam himself was conscious that his statistics were collected under conditions which were far from satisfactory for such an inquiry.

About the district of Burdwan, Adam wrote: "Hamilton states that there are few villages in this district in which there is not a single school where children are taught to read and write" (Long, p. 45). About the district of Jessore, he said: "I have met with no reference

15. Italics are ours—Editors.

to indigenous schools, either elementary or learned, in this district; but it is beyond all questions that the number of both amongst Hindus and Muslims is considerable" (Long, p. 48). Of the district of Nuddea he wrote: "No doubt can be entertained of the existence of such institutions in considerable numbers in this as well as in other districts of Bengal" (Long, p. 49). Further on, Adam says about the Dacca district: "Hamilton states that throughout this district there are many Hindoo schools in which the rudiments of the Bengali language are taught" (Long, p. 55).

To quote an authoritative view in Bombay, "There are probably as great a proportion of persons in India who can read and write and keep simple accounts as are to be found in European countries" (Fifth Annual Report of the Bombay Education Society, 1819, p. 11). "Schools are frequent among the natives and abound everywhere" (Sixth Report of Bombay Education Society, 1820, p. 21). In an official minute dated 27th June 1821, Mr. G. L. Prendergast, a member of the Bombay Governor's Council, in opposing a proposal to establish schools for the "purpose of communicating to natives, destined for public service in the revenue and judicial departments, so much learning as was necessary for them for that service" wrote: "I need hardly mention what every member of the Board knows as well as I do, that there is hardly a village, great or small, throughout our territories, in which there is not at least one school, and in larger villages more, many in every town, and in large cities in every division, where young natives are taught reading, writing and arithmetic, upon a system so economical, from a handful or two of grain to perhaps a rupee per month to the school master, according to the ability of parents, and at the same time so simple and effectual that there is hardly a cultivator or petty dealer who is not competent to keep his own accounts with a degree of accuracy, in my opinion, beyond what we meet with amongst the lower orders in our own country; whilst the more splendid dealers and bankers keep their books with a degree of ease, conciseness and clearness I rather think fully equal to those of any British merchant" (*Minutes*, p. 468).[16]

* * *

Justice Ranade's Opinion

"We feel no doubt," says the late Mr. M. G. Ranade, "that Bombay has not kept pace with Bengal and other parts of India in promoting the cause of Primary education by taking advantage of the indigenous machinery available at its hands, in the same way as has been successfully accomplished elsewhere. This subject of indigenous education may safely be said to be the weakest point in the policy adopted by the officers charged with the spread of education in this Presidency. While everywhere else in India the most strenuous efforts have been made to secure the co-operation of the people in this connection, the ruling principle with the Bombay officers has been to cry down the indigenous system and insist upon the claim of the Department to have an exclusive monopoly of primary education throughout the Presidency. The result is that Bombay stands alone in having the largest number of Govern-

16. In reference to this statement of Mr. Prendergast Sir Philip Hartog says that it cannot be reconciled with the statistics officially recorded—*Some Aspects of Indian Education*, p. 72.

ment primary schools, and the smallest number of primary aided schools. This difference is not one of names, but represents a waste of energy and of money which, if it could be saved by anything that we can here urge, would be a most important departure from the previous traditions, and would further remove to a great extent the difficulty of funds, which is at present pleaded as a reason why Primary education is comparatively at a standstill. . . . The subject of indigenous schools must be approached in another spirit than that which has recommended itself hitherto to the Bombay authorities." [17]

"These facts and figures," continues Mr. Ranade, "are proof of a wonderful vitality in the indigenous system of education, for without some such natural adaptation to the wants and inclination of the people it cannot be lightly supposed that these schools, competing as they do with the comparatively free Government schools, without any help from the State, and without any prestige or organization, could have maintained their ground so long and so well. . . . It is all very well for official inspectors to cry down the instruction and discipline in these schools, but those who rate them so low have yet to explain the anomaly of their continued and popular existence against such odds. We believe, and we make this declaration after wading through an immense mass of official reports from the days of the Board to our own time, that these schools have suffered from the same sort of prejudice which, in a certain class of minds, is begotten of official pride and prejudice against every indigenous effort. There are some minds which cannot be made to believe that qualified efficiency is possible outside the sacred fringe of official hierarchy.

"As regards the choice of subjects, we believe, official authorities make too much point of the crammed book-knowledge of the elements of grammar, geography, and history which are taught in Government schools. . . . A knowledge of the rudiments of reading and writing sufficient for their daily life is all that can be expected at present, and this knowledge the indigenous system of schools provides satisfactorily and cheaply." [17]

* * *

Not a Dead Issue

One may think that this is an unprofitable controversy over a dead issue and if one looked at the question from the controversial viewpoint that would be a sane observation. But, the study of the problem offers some valuable lessons to the Education Ministers and officials of the Education Department. Public opinion has far advanced from the day when the Government of India and most Provincial Governments opposed Gokhale's Bill, on financial and other grounds. No official would now oppose schemes of compulsory education on the ground that universal literacy was not a desirable consummation, that the nations which have secured it are already repenting their folly, and that India may well profit from their experience. If he is found to hold these views he will be asked to vacate his office for one more sensible of India's national needs. But even with the best of intention one may be forced to shelve all schemes of compulsory elementary education for want of funds.

17. *Miscellaneous Writings of Mr. Justice Ranade*, Manoranjan Press, Bombay, 1915, pp. 266, 266.

The study of indigenous schools and their contribution to Indian literacy would be very useful in this respect. Revival of indigenous schools in a modified form to suit present-day idea of a school, would help one out of the situation.

And this is not a mere guess. In 1937, when the Congress party accepted office in Bombay, one of their premier objectives was to liquidate illiteracy. In order to secure that objective they started what are called voluntary schools, and the measure has led to a surprising increase in the number of schools and that of the pupils attending them. In his Report on Public Instruction, for the year 1938-39, the D.P.I. thus refers to this phenomenal increase :

"The increase of 2,790 aided Primary schools is a striking feature of the year which sets a landmark in the history of private enterprise. As many as 2,389 of these schools were opened under the scheme of liquidation of mass illiteracy which was launched by Government during the year. A sum of Rs. 400,000 was earmarked for financing the scheme of voluntary aided schools. The intention underlying the initiation of the scheme was to encourage the establishment of approved schools by local initiative and by the effort of voluntary agencies in villages with a population of less than 700. Wide publicity was given to the conditions on which capitation and equipment grants would be paid to such schools. The maximum grant payable to an approved voluntary school is Rs. 200 including a non-recurring grant of Rs. 35 which is intended to meet the initial cost of equipment."

"It is gratifying to note," continues the D.P.I., "that the response from the public in the matter of putting the full machinery of the scheme into operation was spontaneous and that the provision of Rs. 400,000 made for the purpose was not only utilised in full but an additional allotment of Rs. 22,000 had to be found during the year for the purpose. There is thus a network of schools in smaller villages in all the districts of the Province. In view of the interest evinced by public-spirited bodies and individuals towards the removal of mass illiteracy, Government announced at the close of the year, their intention of extending the scope of the scheme which has since been placed on a more definite footing. Rules have been framed for the guidance of educational officers, for the award of grants to individual schools and associations ; and a simplified and practical course of instruction for these schools has also been drawn up for the guidance of village teachers. With a view to creating an atmosphere of confidence and stability in the minds of the individuals and associations, responsible for the opening of a large number of these voluntary schools, Government have since announced their intention to continue to pay grants direct to schools already opened in villages with a population of less than 700 as well as those that will be opened in future. As regards the other schools, viz. those opened in villages with a population of 700 or over, with a view to seeing that voluntary effort is not nipped in the bud, the Local Authorities concerned have been requested to take them over as early as possible or, until that became possible, to pay them grants at the same rate at which such schools in smaller villages will be receiving grants direct from Government."

It is difficult to make out what the D.P.I. had at the back of his mind when he wrote the last sentence of the above paragraph. We are

afraid it is an indication that he has not correctly understood the purpose which these voluntary schools are expected to serve in the national educational system, although he has said in the beginning that they were opened "under the scheme of liquidation of mass illiteracy". It will be wrong to saddle these schools with rigid rules, set curricula, howsoever simple and practical, periodical examinations or minimum attendance per day, which the Local Authority schools are expected to adopt. Their main purpose is to spread literacy in the villages where they are situated and so long as they continue to do it, they should be allowed to exist unmolested by regulations and rigid courses. They are a modified form of the old indigenous schools and even in the first year of their existence have filled us with hope that liquidation of illiteracy in a measurable time is not an impracticable ideal. But the men who conceived the plan and launched it with courage have now relinquished their offices, entrusting so valuable an experiment to the care of officials, devoid of imagination and faith in the experiment. We shall not be surprised if the Director of Information one day announces that Government have decided to discontinue payment of grants to voluntary schools as the instruction imparted to the pupils of these schools is not worthy of the expenses incurred for their maintenance.

* * *

Achievement of the Voluntary Schools

It would, therefore, be useful to obtain a correct idea of what these voluntary schools have done in the very first year of their existence. And the following figures deserve to be studied in this connexion :

Number of Pupils in Primary Schools
(In the Province of Bombay)

Year	Number in Schools	Increase
1912	517,369	
1917	570,354	52,985 or 10,600 per year.
1922	798,508	228,154 or 45,600 ,,
1927	984,726	186,218 or 37,200 ,,
1932	1,143,808 (998,325)[18]	159,108 or 31,800 ,,
1937	1,140,299	141,974 or 28,400 ,,
1938	1,191,509	51,210 in a year.
1939	1,322,668	131,159 in a year.

The increase (131,159) in the number of pupils attending primary schools in the year 1938-39 is nearly equal to the increase in the quinquennium 1932-37, and is two and a half times that in the quinquennium 1912-17. In his article Mr. Parulekar observes (page 25): "Spread of literacy is not necessarily dependent on the quality of instruction imparted in a school. In fact undue emphasis on quality

18. This figure is for the Province of Bombay excluding Sind and is given here in order to enable the readers to properly appreciate the increase in 1937 and succeeding years when Sind was separated from Bombay.

may be antagonistic to the rapid spread of literacy." The work of voluntary schools is a striking evidence in support of his observation. So long as the aim was to have a good school or no school, i.e. between 1912 and 1922, the number of pupils increased by about 280,000 only. The character of the administration changed a little in 1923 and perhaps the efficiency of school instruction was a bit lowered; but in the next decade the number of pupils in primary schools increased by 350,000. In 1937 when there was a re-orientation of Government policy, the increase in two years has been 180,000. Of the 131,159 added in the year 1938-39, 32,568 were girls and 35,916 were backward class pupils. It is an indication that the voluntary schools have established contact with groups and communities who have so far not shown much enthusiasm for literacy, just what the indigenous schools did in India a hundred years ago. They were not efficient organizations; rather they did not have any organization. But, says Adam: "To whatever extent such institutions may exist, and in whatever condition they may be found, stationary, advancing, or retrograding, they present the only true and sure foundations on which any scheme of general or national education can be established. We may deepen and extend the foundations, we may improve, enlarge and beautify the superstructure, but they are the foundations on which the building should be raised." The old "foundations" have been dug out; the new ones are perhaps more elegant in appearance but are too small to sustain the superstructure of universal literacy. The foundations have, therefore, to be made bigger and wider by the addition of the voluntary schools. They are the only true and sure foundations on which any scheme of universal literacy can and should be raised. For if they give in the next seven years results similar to those secured in 1938-39 all children of school-going age, in the Province of Bombay, will, in 1950, be attending schools. Here are a few figures deserving notice:

Population of the Bombay Province excluding Sind	190 lakhs
Pupils of 6 to 11 years, 12 p.c. of above ..	22.8 lakhs
Pupils already enrolled in schools ..	13.0 lakhs
Pupils to be yet enrolled ..	9.8 lakhs

In the year 1938-39 the increase in the number of children in primary schools was 1.3 lakhs. "Government have announced their intention of extending the scope of the scheme" and if the average increase in the next seven years be taken at 1.5 lakhs per year, by 1947 all pupils of 6 to 11 years will be attending schools.

In this calculation there is an incorrect assumption. 190 lakhs was the population of the Bombay Province in 1931. It has probably increased by now to 209 lakhs. Secondly as we try to draw in pupils from distant tracts and backward localities, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the usual rate of increase. It may still be not too optimistic to hope that by 1950 the Province of Bombay will announce to the world that in the next generation there will not be a single adult unable to read and write.

A STUDY OF CORRELATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND LITERACY FIGURES OF THE BOMBAY PROVINCE—1931 AND 1941*

The Census operations of 1941 showed that in the Bombay Province there were 21 literates in every 100 population, while the corresponding number of literates in 1931 was 10. In the previous decades the increase in literacy percentage was about 1 to 2, in each decade; but between 1931 and 1941, it shot up from 10 to 21, i.e. the percentage increased by 11. This unprecedented increase in literacy during the decade 1931-41 is shared by all parts of India. For India as a whole the literacy percentage has increased from 7 to 12. In former decades it increased by about *one*. In Bengal it rose from 9 to 16; in Madras from 10 to 13; in the U.P. from 5 to 8; in the Punjab from 5 to 13. No other Province approaches Bombay in the rise of literacy percentage. Although in former years Bombay led other Provinces in literacy percentage by a fraction only, in 1941, it leads other Provinces in literacy by a good margin. Bombay leads all Provinces with 21 percentage of literacy, while Bengal stands second with 16.

It is natural that curiosity should be aroused as to why Bombay should have recorded such an unprecedented increase during the decade 1931-1941. It is the purpose of this paper to analyse the statistics of literacy and those of school children and try to find out the causes behind this unprecedented increase in literacy in Bombay.

Literates are firstly the products of schools and secondly the products of agencies other than schools. In the following pages, an attempt is made to assign the increase to these two agencies responsible for new literates. It must be admitted, at the outset, that the findings of the statistical investigations discussed here should be taken as broad indications and not as accurate measurements. In the absence of pertinent statistics both of the census literacy and of school children, what one can do is to make use of whatever statistics are available and from them deduce certain broad indications or trends which will help us to know why Bombay has recorded such comparatively high rise in the literacy percentage in 1941.

It is well known that the educational administration in the Province of Bombay during the closing years of the decade 1931-41, under the Congress Ministry, was marked by two important and novel features: (1) The Literacy Campaigns and all that is connected with them, and (2) The opening of voluntary aided schools on a scale which has no

* A Paper read at the Bombay Provincial Secondary Teachers' Conference, 7th Session, Dadar, Bombay, by Principal R. V. Parulekar, M.A., M.Ed. of S.M.T.T. College, Kolhapur (1945).

parallel in any other Province. Both these measures, among other ones, must have contributed to the increase in the literacy percentage. We shall try to find out the extent of the influence of these measures on the literacy of the Province.

A comparative study of literacy figures for the Province of Bombay (British Districts) of 1931 and 1941 shows that in the decade 1931-1941, new literates were produced to the extent of 28,86,000. (For details see Tables at the end.)

Ages		Number of new literates
0—10		4,10,000
10—20		11,56,000
20—30		6,89,000
30 and over		6,31,000
	Total	28,86,000

The following presumptions are made in order to facilitate a critical study of these figures:—

(1) The literates (4,10,000) of ages 0—10 must be reading in schools at the time of counting in the 1941 census.

(2) The literates (11,56,000) of ages 10—20 must be persons made literate by schools during 1931-1941.

(3) The literates of 20—30 and of 30 and over (6,89,000 + 6,31,000 = 13,20,000) are made literate by agencies other than regular primary schools.

It will be seen that the central idea on which the above assumptions are based is this: A child, if he joins a school, becomes literate by the time he is 10 years old. If he continues to be in school after the age of 10, his further stay there has nothing to do with the acquisition of literacy. This is a broad assumption and may generally hold good.

I shall now try to find how far the numbers of new literates produced during the decade 1931-1941 in the first two categories, correlate with the numbers of school children given in the D.P.I.'s Reports. For I have assumed that the literates in these two categories are the products of schools.

The number of literates in the first category representing ages 0—10 produced in the decade 1931-1941 is seen to be 4,10,000. Of these the children of ages 5—10 were 4,06,000. These all must have been reading in schools in 1941. It is necessary to know in which of the school classes they were learning at the time of the counting. The D.P.I.'s Report for 1941-42 gives figures of the children by ages and by classes as they stood in March 1942. The corresponding

figures for March 1941 are not available. Disregarding the difference of one year, let us assume that the state of things revealed in March 1942 was approximately the same as in March 1941.

We thus get (D.P.I.'s Report 1941-42, Vol. I, p. 114) the following figures:—

Children of 5-10 years presumed to be learning in schools in March 1941:—

Infant standard, i.e. first year class	1st standard, i.e. 2nd year class	2nd standard, i.e. third year class	3rd standard and above i.e. 4th year class and above
4,84,000	2,28,000	1,52,000	1,78,000

From these figures it will be seen that the number of children of 5—10 years who were recorded as literates in 1941 census, could be accounted for by the 3,30,000 children learning in the third year class and above and by 76,000, i.e. nearly 33 per cent, of the children learning in the 2nd year class as well. These findings are slightly marred by the assumption that 1942 figures are taken to represent 1941 figures. But speaking broadly, there is no doubt that in the census operations of 1941, not only all children of 5—10 years learning in 3rd year class and above were counted as literates, but nearly one-third of the same age-group learning in the 2nd year class were also counted as literate.

A similar investigation made for the 1921 census operations showed that all children of ages 5—10 learning in the 4th year classes and above and 40 per cent of those learning in the third year class were counted as literate (*Literacy in India*, R. V. Parulekar, 1939, p. 30). Twenty years after, i.e. in 1941, the census literacy standard is presumed to be attained by all children of 5—10 learning in the third year class and above and also by about 33 per cent of the children in the 2nd year class. In other words, in 1941 a child of 5—10 learning in school is reported to have attained the census literacy standard a year earlier than a child of the same age-group in 1921. This may appear surprising and to some even disappointing. But to appreciate the recorded fact one must remember that during the 20 years, 1921-1941, the means of acquiring a tolerable facility to read and write have become so extensive in the form of books and writing materials that a child who *successfully* attends a school for 3 years can achieve a mastery in reading and writing which a child of similar age and schooling could achieve in four years, 20 years ago. Moreover to appreciate this change, one must remember that no test of reading and writing is actually applied to a child by the census enumerator. He simply asks the question—Does the child read

and write? The reply is given either by the child himself or by some-one else in the house. The child is now more confident of his ability to read and write than a similar child of 20 years ago; and he or his guardian replies to the question—can he read and write—in the affirmative, when 20 years ago he or his guardian replied in the negative or in a hesitating manner. That is why the census literacy is reported to have been achieved by all children in schools in the 3rd year class and by some learning in the 2nd year class also. Twenty years ago, the corresponding class was one year in advance. There is no doubt that the census literacy standard is acquired now-a-days much earlier by a child attending school and to that extent what is called 'wastage' is substantially reduced, whatever the official reports may say in that respect.

We now take up the second category of literates, i.e. those whose ages were 10—20 in 1941. The new literates produced in the decade 1931-1941 of this age-group were 11,56,000. But this number would have to be increased in the proportion of 95 to 100 if the deaths among the new literates are to be taken into account. (Vide *Literacy in India*, 1939, p. 173.) Thus the gross number of new literates of 10—20 produced in the decade would come to 12,17,000. These, we have assumed, must have attained literacy while they were at school, each at about the age of 10. The oldest of them attained literacy 10 years ago in 1931-32 and the youngest in 1940-41.

We have already seen that children learning for a year in the third year class were counted as literates in the 1941 census. It may, therefore, be assumed that children who completed their third year classes in the decade 1932-1941 ought to be counted as literates. The number of children (boys and girls) who had completed the third year class by being entitled to a promotion from that class was 11,80,000 during the decade 1932-1941. (This figure is extracted by Mr. Naravane of the N.E. School, Poona, from the statements supplied in the D.P.I.'s reports for the years 1932-1941.) The number of new literates of 10—20 during the decade is already shown to be 12,17,000. It, therefore, appears that not only all children (11,80,000) who had successfully completed the third year class during 1932-1941 were counted as literates in 1941 census, but there were some more about 37,000 (12,17,000—11,80,000) who have yet to be accounted for. This number is small and let us not wait to account for them. One thing is thus clear. All children who had successfully completed the third year class during the decade 1932-1941 were counted as literates in 1941 census. A similar scrutiny of figures of the 1931 census showed that in that year's census, in the Bombay Presidency (including Sind) all children who had completed the 4th year class and also about 66 per cent of the children who had completed the third year class only, were counted as literates.

(*Literacy in India*, 1939, p. 29.) In 1941 the primary class in which census literacy is attained has definitely shifted to the third year class much more definitely than in the year 1931. This is also a clear indication of the fact already noted in the case of children learning in schools, viz. pupils in the primary schools are acquiring the census standard of literacy earlier by a year now than 10 years ago.

We now come to the category of new literates of ages 20 and over added in the decade 1931-1941. This number is shown to be 13,20,000. Some of these new recruits may be from those who were of ages 10 and over in 1931 and yet who were learning in schools without attaining literacy in 1931. They might have become literate afterwards by continuing in schools for some time more. But the number of such persons must be so small that, for a broad consideration, this number may be neglected. Thus we find that during the year 1931-1941, about 13 lakhs of new literates were added to the *adult* literates of ages 20 and over. This phenomenon is unique and it is the peculiar characteristic of this decade (1931-1941) only. During previous decades the number of literates of 20 and over in any census year was always less than the number of literates of 10 and over in the previous census year 10 years ago. For instance, in 1921, the number of literates of 10 and over was 13,98,000 and that of 20 and over in 1931 was 12,23,000. This reduction in number was obviously due to the deaths among the old literates and also to the fact that in that decade there was hardly any addition of new adult literates.

What does this new phenomenon show? It clearly indicates that during the decade 1931-1941, some forces were at work which did not exist in the previous decades—forces by which adults of 20 and over were added to the ranks of literates numbering about 13 lakhs. It is obvious that the regular schools did not materially help in this new and unexpected acquisition to the ranks of the adult literates. For none of them was less than 10 years of age in 1931 and, in the great majority of cases, boys and girls attain the census literacy standard by that age (10) if they have the chance of being in schools.

How did this great number of nearly 13 lakhs of new adults came to be added to the number of literates of ages 20 and over? Did they acquire literacy in the adult classes that were started at some places during the closing years of the decade 1931-1941. Granting that the Adult Literacy Campaigns opened soon after the accession of the Congress Ministry in 1937 were rigorous and effective, it is impossible to imagine that these campaigns and the adult classes started during the 3 to 4 years preceding 1941, were able to bring into the fold of literates 13 lakhs of new adult literates. For, as is well known, the effect of the Literacy Campaigns was more in arousing an interest in literacy among the adults than in giving them literacy by actual teaching. It

was only in the city of Bombay that the Literacy Campaign was stabilised by bringing into existence the Bombay Adult Education Committee which till March 1941, was able to convert about 30,000 illiterate adults into literate ones. In other parts of the Province, although adult literacy classes were started at several places, the actual number of adults under instruction was too small to cover the number of 13 lakhs of new adult literates.

There is no doubt that the propaganda made in favour of raising the importance of literacy among the adults was effective in several respects. Persons who were not literate were made to desire that they ought to be literate. It was realised by lakhs and lakhs of persons, young and old, that literacy, i.e. ability to read and write, was something worth having; for everyone was saying that literacy was worth having. And although the number of adults actually taught to read and write during the years 1938-1941 was not big, yet, an unprecedented interest in literacy was certainly created among the masses who were touched by the campaigns against illiteracy. Hitherto they were indifferent to the necessity of acquiring literacy; now they felt interested in its acquisition. This great change in the outlook towards literacy was mainly responsible for the unprecedented rise in the number of adult literates.

The Campaigns against illiteracy opened during the concluding years of the decade 1931-1941 started a sort of psychological ferment which has transformed the mentality of thousands and thousands of persons touched by the campaigns, some profoundly and some superficially. It is, therefore, undoubtedly the result of the campaigns, in some cases by actual instruction given in adult classes but in the great majority of cases by indirect means of 'Suggestion' that 13 and odd lakhs of so-called 'illiterates' were converted into 'literates' during the decade 1931-1941. They had attended primary schools in their young days; but they had left the schools without going up to the stage where literacy as defined by the census could be acquired. In other words, they constituted cases of what is popularly styled as 'Wastage'. Although they had some mastery over the arts of reading and writing, the mastery was not enough to give them confidence to declare themselves as 'literates', when confronted by the census enumerators with the question—Are you able to read and write a letter? In fact they had a fear created by the idea which had spread abroad that their 'literacy' was far removed from the literacy of the educated person who could read and write fluently; and hence they thought it would be simply foolish if they declared that they were literates. This fear or rather want of confidence in their own ability to read and write was given a short shrift by the Literacy Campaigns of recent years. They were given to understand that an absolutely illiterate adult could be

'literate' within a space of 4 to 6 months if he attended an adult class. The persons thus came to realise that their literacy was not altogether useless; it could be improved with the least exertion. The confidence was enough to make them bold enough to get themselves included in the category of 'literates'. Thus within the short space of 2 to 3 years before the 1941 census, most of the 'Wastage' cases were brought under the category of 'literates'. In fact it may be said with certainty that the huge addition of 13 lakhs of adults to the ranks of literates in 1941 census, is mostly due to the reclamation of the 'Wastage' cases of former years. The cases were waiting for reclamation. It was the magic touch of the Literacy Campaigns that started the activity of reclamation. The accumulated heap of 'Wastage' cases during the past several years has been materially reduced and it is hoped that in future years it will not gather strength as it did in the past.

It may be asked—Why did not a similar increase in literacy take place in other provinces? There must have been cases of 'wastage' as in Bombay; and in some provinces at least the Literacy Campaigns were as vigorous, if not more so, as in Bombay. The reply to this question is as follows. In other provinces and particularly in Bengal and the U.P. in former years the practice was that those persons who had completed the 2nd year class in a primary school were counted as literates by the census enumerators. In all provinces except Bombay it was the practice to include among literates all persons who had completed the 2nd year class or at the most the 3rd year class; but in Bombay up to 1941, the completion of the 4th year class (here called 3rd standard) was the main basis of counting literates at the time of the census, although some of those who had completed the 3rd year class were also counted as literates. Thus there were lakhs of persons in Bombay who had completed the 2nd year class or even 3rd year class who were not counted as literates in the previous census operations. Equally instructed persons in other provinces were already counted as literates in previous census. Thus the Bombay Province had a large reserve consisting of several lakhs of adult persons in 1941, who according to the practice followed in other provinces were surely 'literates', but who were not counted as such in the previous years owing to the higher standard of literacy prevailing in Bombay. Other provinces had no such reserves of previous decades. The Literacy Campaigns gave Bombay what was already due to it in the form of 13 lakhs of adult literates as compared with other provinces. How this was done is already described. That is why Bombay led other provinces in 1941 in Literacy by a good margin. Had the census enumerators in Bombay followed the practice of other Provinces in the previous census, there is no doubt that in 1931 Bombay would have led other provinces by a good margin and not by a fraction as was shown in the 1931 census.

It seemed to be a puzzle hitherto that Bombay should be almost on a par with Bengal in literacy percentage, inspite of the fact that Bombay's system of primary education from the points of view of efficiency, expansion and expenditure was far superior to that of Bengal and yet Bombay and Bengal were declared by the census report of 1931 to be on a par in Literacy. The puzzle is partly solved in 1941 census and Bombay has got its due place—positively the *first* province in literacy percentage in British India.

The scheme of liquidation of mass illiteracy by the opening of one-teacher voluntary aided schools, was launched in the year 1937-38 and the response from the public to this scheme was so great that between the years 1938 and 1942, 7,080 such schools were opened and about 4,24,000 pupils were brought under instruction (D.P.I's Report 1941-42 pp. 24-25). Almost all these schools were opened in villages of less than 700 population. People who had not even dreamt of having a school for their children were given schools and they were crowded with children. It must be admitted that this rush of pupils was partly due to the enthusiasm created in the people by the mass literacy campaigns by their varied methods of arousing interest in schools and in the acquisition of literacy.

Did the voluntary aided schools contribute substantially to the increase of literacy recorded in the 1941 census? They did their work in various ways, although the time to show results was very short. Firstly, people were given an opportunity to impart instruction to children who were hitherto prevented from receiving such benefit. The voluntary aided schools were, in some respects, peoples' schools and the people contributed to the expenditure voluntarily in various ways. These 7,000 centres of enlightenment could hardly fail to impress upon the people the importance of literacy in its wide sense and they thus served indirectly the part played by Mass Literacy Campaigns that were carried on in the Province and which, as we have already seen, played a great part in adding large number of adults to the ranks of adult literates.

We have already seen that for the purpose of acquisition of literacy according to the census standard, a stay for a year in the third year primary class is generally considered as sufficient. Even supposing that about 4 lakhs of children were brought under instruction under the scheme of voluntary aided schools during the years 1938-1941, at the most moderate estimate, it could be taken as certain that at least one-fourth of them, i.e. 1,00,000 must have been counted in the census of 1941 as literate. That may be taken as the direct contribution to literacy by these voluntary aided schools. It should be noted that this number (1,00,000), small as it may appear, is nearly one-fourth of the total literates (4,10,000) counted from amongst school children up to

the age of 10 in the whole Province of Bombay. The indirect contribution of these voluntary aided schools to the unprecedented increase in the literacy as recorded in 1941, cannot be under-estimated, as they have served as centres of enlightenment to lakhs of rural citizens, awakening in them a new sense of appreciation of schooling and therefore of the value of being literate. It may be asked by some—What kind of literacy is this which a child is supposed to have acquired in about 3 years' successful stay in a primary school? To this the reply is—the countries of the world who have laid down a literacy standard for the purpose of census, have fixed even a lower aim than what is prescribed in Bombay or in India. The Fourteenth Census of U.S.A. (1920) Report makes a significant observation regarding the meaning and value of literacy statistics in that country. It says:

"Illiteracy as defined by the Census Bureau signifies inability to write in any language, regardless of ability to read. In general, the illiterate population as shown by the census figures should be understood as comprising only those persons who have had no education whatever. Thus the statistics do not show directly or indirectly the proportion of population which may be termed illiterate when the word is used to imply lack of ability to read and write with a reasonable degree of facility, but they do afford a fairly reliable measure of the effect of the improvement in the educational opportunities from decade to decade."

The definitions of 'illiteracy' prescribed by the several countries of the world are given in *Literacy in India*, 1939, p. 8. They are of a far lower standard than the one prevailing in India where the definition of literacy is—ability to read and write a letter.

Whether India should adopt a census definition of literacy which is stricter than what obtains in most of the countries of the world is a question for India to decide. However, when India is compared with other nations of the world from the point of view of literacy and its progress from decade to decade, the fact that the Indian definition is far stricter should not be lost sight of.

What I want to submit is this. The Literacy which a child acquires in about 3 years' stay in a primary school or the literacy acquired by an adult by 4 to 6 months' attendance in an adult class is in no way of lesser standard than what other countries mean by "Literacy" according to their census reports. It is not implied by the above discussion that ability to read and write a letter is a commendable goal of our educational system. Far from it. But it must at the same time be remembered that if India wants to remove the blot of illiteracy at the quickest speed and in the shortest time it is the low-range instruction spread on the widest scale by schools like the voluntary aided schools of Bombay or adult literacy classes started under the Literacy

Campaigns that can give India a fairly extensive measure of literacy as judged by a standard which is in no way less than the standards adopted in other countries of the world.

Let me conclude by quoting G. K. Gokhale than whom a greater friend of mass education can hardly be found. In his historic speech in the Central Legislature in 1910-11, appealing unsuccessfully for the introduction of compulsory education in India and anticipating the opposition view he observed:

> "Primary purpose of mass education is to banish illiteracy from the land. The quality of education is a matter of importance that comes only after illiteracy has been banished."

A study of the history of the progress of mass education in *all* the countries of the world, without a single exception, amply confirms what Gokhale said in his intense anxiety to see a literate India in the shortest possible time.

APPENDIX

In the census report of 1941 for the Bombay Province, the figures for literacy have been prepared on a random sample basis. The sample was arrived at by taking every thirtieth slip for Bombay City and every fiftieth slip for other British Districts. (Census Report, p. 125.) In the previous census reports, every slip, i.e. every person, was counted as literate. The 'random sample basis' adopted in 1941 is obviously as a measure of war economy. How far this new method will affect the accuracy of the literacy figures for the Province, it is difficult to say. It is generally believed that this 'random sample basis' gives fairly reliable figures. On pages 142-145 of the Bombay Census Report for 1941 are given the figures for Literacy by age. From these figures the *total* number of literates of respective ages is arrived at by multiplying each figure by 48, as it is found that every 48th slip is counted. Another important feature newly introduced in 1941 Census Report is that the age-groups beyond 20 years are extended into sub-groups of 20—30; 30—50 and 50 and over. In the previous reports there was only one group of 20 and over. This new feature is of very great importance to a student of literacy figures. Census authorities have rendered a great service to the cause of a critical study of Census Literacy figures by the incorporation of these new age-groups beyond 20 years.

A third innovation introduced in the Census literacy figures of 1941 is this: Besides the heading 'illiterate', the 'literate' heading is divided further into three sub-heads: (1) partially literate, (2) literate in languages other than English, and (3) literate in English. In the previous reports there were three categories: (1) illiterate, (2) literate, and (3) literate in English. In the second category all persons who were literate in any languages whatever (including English) were included. The 'partially literate' heading was not there; and the persons 'literate in English' were already counted in the 'literate'

heading. While in 1941, persons 'literate in English' appear to have been excluded from those who are 'literate in languages other than English'. This means that many Indians who are literate in their own languages, but who, at the same time, may be literate in English, are included in the category of 'literate in English'. The result of this new feature is that when a comparison is to be made between the literacy figures of 1931 and 1941, it is necessary to get the 1941 figures of literates by adding figures in the columns 'literate in languages other than English' and 'literate in English'. The 'partially literate' category is altogether a new one in 1941 census and in a comparative study of figures of literacy of 1931 and 1941, this category has to be excluded altogether.

These explanatory observations will help to understand how the figures in the following Tables are extracted :—

TABLE A

Age-groups	1941	1931
0– 5	4,000	..
5–10	4,06,000	1,13,000
10–15	6,61,000	1,89,000
15–20	5,97,000	2,49,000
20–30	10,77,000 }	
30–50	11,49,000 }	12,23,000
50 and over	3,58,000 }	
Total ..	42,52,000	17,74,000
Total Population ..	2,08,50,000	1,79,05,000
Percentage of literates to the total population ..	20.9	9.9

The following Table will show the literates of 1931 of different age-groups who survived in 1941 :—

TABLE B

Age-groups	Literates in 1931	Death rate per cent during the decade	Literates of 1931 surviving in 1941
0–10	1,13,000	10	1,02,000
10–20	4,38,000	12	3,88,000
20 and over	12,23,000	28.4	8,76,000
Total ..	17,74,000	23	13,66,000

N.B.—The death rates given here are approximate (vide *Literacy in India,* 1939, by R. V. Parulekar, pp. 171-173).

Each of these age-groups must have advanced by 10 years in 1941. In the following Table, the literates of 1931 surviving in 1941 are shown against an age-group which is 10 years in advance of the one in Table B. The Table also gives the literates of 1941 of the appropriate age-groups.

TABLE C

Age-groups	Literates of 1941	Surviving literates of 1931	New Literates added in the decade 1931–1941
0–10	4,10,000	..	4,10,000
10–20	12,58,000	1,02,000	11,56,000
20–30	10,77,000	3,88,000	6,89,000
30 & above	15,07,000	8,76,000	6,31,000
Total ..	42,52,000	13,66,000	28,86,000

THE PLACE OF LITERACY IN SOCIAL EDUCATION IN INDIA*

The most outstanding event that has happened in India, in the field of Adult Education, since the attainment of Independence, is giving a new orientation to Adult Education by naming it 'Social Education'. *The Progress of Education in India, 1947-52*, a Central Government Publication, observes in this connection (p. 8): "At one time programmes of adult education aimed only at teaching to read and write, but this led to a reaction which at times denied the value of literacy itself. The new conception of Social Education formulated by Government of India recognises the importance of literacy, but places even greater stress on the need to sustain the interest of the adult. A new five-pointed programme of Social Education has been formulated which seeks to place appropriate emphasis on (*a*) literacy; (*b*) measures of health and hygiene; (*c*) improvement of economic conditions; (*d*) civic education and training in citizenship; and (*e*) recreational aspects of education."

While thoroughly appreciating this new approach to adult education, I must point out that this has tended to relegate the "Literacy" part of the five-pointed programme into the background, by placing greater stress on the other four items of the programme. The reasons are obvious.

Firstly, the acquisition of literacy by an illiterate adult is a process which involves mental exertion on the part of the adult learner as well as of his instructor. On the other hand, the programmes meant to instruct the adults in other aspects of Social Education mentioned above, can be carried out by the instructor and attended to by the adults without any mental strain. It is no wonder, therefore, that the literacy part of the social education programme should receive less attention.

Secondly, the programmes for instruction of the adults—both literate and illiterate—in the subjects other than literacy, involve no assessment of instruction. So many gatherings were held, so many lectures or entertainment programmes were arranged and so many adults attended—these usually form the substance of the account or report of such programmes. In such a kind of work, workers are much relieved of the onerous duty of keeping watch over the daily routine of a literacy class for adults and submitting their work for assessment at stated intervals. There is, therefore, a general tendency to give greater prominence to the non-literacy part of Social Education pro-

* Presidential Address delivered by Shri R. V. Parulekar at the Eleventh Session of All-India Adult Education Conference held at Patna on 29th and 30th December 1954.

grammes by the workers themselves. Literacy programmes are dull, strainful and unobtrusive. Other programmes are lively and spectacular. Human nature being what it is, it is no wonder that the latter kind of work has come into the forefront, pushing aside the former.

It must be admitted that barring some exceptions, the older scheme of Adult Education devoted its sole attention to the promotion of adult literacy. The new scheme has, no doubt, done well in bringing in the other aspects of adult instruction by giving it the new name of 'Social Education'. It has thrown out excellent ideas and objectives. In practice, however, it is feared that the new approach will not be able to achieve substantial results without sacrificing the good that the old scheme—Adult Education—was doing in the field of adult literacy.

In India, it is usually assumed that for the attainment of elementary literacy, an adult ought to attend a class for an hour a day for a period of four months. Methods and means were evolved in different States on the basis of a four months' basic course of literacy. So far as I know, that period of four months' attendance in a literacy class for adults, is not proportionately extended. Attempt is being made to impart all kinds of instruction including literacy within a four-month session which was formerly considered adequate for the acquisition of literacy only. Not that the organisers of Social Education have not realised the inadequacy of the time now devoted by an adult to what is called Social Education, but the limitations of finances do not allow them to raise the period of time. Time and resources are inadequate for the successful completion of all that is implied in the new approach to Adult Education.

It may be argued by some who do not think well of 'literacy', that no harm will be done to the movement of Social Education as it is now envisaged, if the literacy aspect of the programme is subordinated or even eliminated. The civic training contemplated in the Social Education programme will more than compensate for the neglect of literacy training. 'Literacy is no education', they argue. "Why should we then make a fuss about it? What we want now is to turn the present generation of illiterate adults into better citizens of our country and this objective can be better achieved by concentrating on civic training and not on literacy training."

Those who argue on these lines seem to have failed to realise the supreme need of promoting literacy in a nation of 36 crores, more than 80% of whom are altogether illiterate. If we look to the literacy standards of the nations who are our neighbours, let alone the other nations of the world, we find that Ceylon, Burma and China have today a literacy percentage which is between 50 and 60%. The Indian Union recorded in 1951 a literacy percentage of 17 (all ages). Some of the

major States of the Indian Union have recorded a lower percentage of 14. This is a state of things which obviously puts Bharat somewhere near the lowest rung of the ladder when literacy percentages of the civilized nations of the world are taken into consideration. It is well known that literacy percentages of nations are collected from time to time by the UNESCO for comparing the standards of opportunities made available by each nation to the masses for their general advancement. Can we afford to show our country in a pitiable position from decade to decade? Should we not do all we can to raise the percentage of literacy of our masses and thus place Bharat on a comparable standard in the comity of nations? It is unthinkable to visualize Bharat rising to its full height without raising the educational standard of its masses. I have purposely used the words 'educational standard'; for I want to clear out here the relation of 'literacy' to what is called 'education' and thus to answer those who want 'education' but not 'literacy', assuming that 'literacy is no education'.

According to the advocates of this school of thought, education is quite different from literacy, i.e. acquisition of the ability to read and write. No one, not even the greatest advocates of literacy, will contend that the acquisition of literacy is identical with the acquisition of education. But even the most zealous advocates of education must admit that acquisition of literacy is the first essential step in the acquisition of education. It is, therefore, difficult to understand why the advocates of education should belittle the importance of literacy. They will certainly not deny that whatever be our ideas about education, the ability to read and write is its very root. Education in its modern sense is organically connected with the ability to read and write and no amount of wordy warfare can dislodge literacy from its high pedestal in the acquisition of education. In fact, broadly speaking, literacy is the foundation on which the structure of education is to be built. The advocates of literacy do not want to deny the right of a citizen to have more than what is implied in the term 'literacy'; for, they also believe that literacy is not an end but it is only a means of further education. Therefore, what they demand is to have first things first.

Granting that raising of literacy percentage in our country as quickly as possible is a great need, why should it be necessary to impart literacy to illiterate adults for that purpose? Why not make the young children literate as quickly as possible and leave the illiterate adults to be subjected to 'civic training' contemplated in the programme now chalked out for Social Education? This argument seems to be sound on its face. Many friends of literacy feel that concentrating on youngsters for the spread of literacy and leaving adult illiterates to themselves will be an effective method of solving the problem of the spread of literacy in our country. History of Education of educationally advanced

countries like England or Japan shows that these countries, *in one supreme effort*, brought all young children under instruction and did not bother themselves much about the illiterate adults that escaped school instruction and thus remained illiterate. Why should not India follow this method in tackling the problem of literacy or rather of removing the blot of illiteracy?

Let us, therefore, examine the work of primary schools in the matter of promotion of literacy in our country. In 1951 the population of the Indian Union was about 36 crores. The children in primary stage in that year were about 1,85,00,000. This means that out of every 100 persons in the country, 5 were at school in the primary stage in 1951. It is usually assumed that 15% of the total population constitutes the school-going population of the age-group of 6 to 11. It will be seen that in 1951 the Indian Union had 1 child in school out of every 3 that ought to be there. Let us further examine the financial position of the educational expenditure of the country. The total budget of expenditure for 1951-52 from all the States in the Indian Union amounted to 440 crores of rupees. Out of this the amount of their educational expenditure stood at 65 crores and that of primary education, at 33 crores. This shows that the States on an average spent about 15% of their total revenues on education and about 7.5% on primary education alone.

Today one child out of every three is attending school. The accommodation must be trebled if all the school-going children are to be brought under instruction at the primary stage in the very near future. At the present scale of expenditure, the States will have to treble their expenditure on primary education, let alone the consequent increase in the whole field of education. On an average 22% of the total revenue of the States will have to be kept aside for primary education only. And if the consequent rise in other fields of education is taken into account, the educational budget of the States will absorb about 45% of the revenue of the States constituting the Indian Union.

From the statistics given above, it will be clear that with all the best wishes of our high-placed administrators, it is practically impossible for the Indian Union as a whole, to make a substantial headway in increasing the scope of primary education so as to touch all our school-going children.

Realising the inability of the States to introduce a comprehensive programme of primary education and thus substantially increase the percentage of literacy through the schools in the near future, one is obliged to look to other sources by which the literacy percentage may be substantially increased within lesser financial resources. And this brings us to a position where the adult literacy programme becomes of utmost

national importance. Promotion of literacy through adult instruction is much more quicker and cheaper than through school instruction of children. In a country like ours where money is not available in the near future for a very wide network of schools and where the literacy percentage is very low, promotion of literacy through adult instruction is the only method that is possible to be resorted to. It is, therefore, that a plea is being made here to give a prominent place to literacy programmes in the Social Education programmes now followed throughout the country at the behest of the Central Government.

During recent times, the only country in the world which is reported to have succeeded in wiping out illiteracy in the period of a decade or two mainly through adult instruction is the U.S.S.R. They succeeded in doing so, because they were able to create an atmosphere where illiteracy came to be looked upon as a great national evil. Writing about Russia and its campaign against illiteracy, Mr. Cousins, of the Columbia University, wrote in 1935: " A psychological ferment has been started that already has profoundly disturbed and transformed the mentality of a population of one hundred and six million. People have been taught to read; men and women have been told to hope; ideas have been disseminated on an unprecedented scale; forces have been released that can never be controlled." (*Modern Review*, April 1935, p. 494.)

It is true that the U.S.S.R. methods cannot be followed in India, for reasons which are too well known to be mentioned. In the U.S.S.R., they got their freedom by a revolution which shook the very foundations of society. The mentality of the common man was entirely different from what it was before the Revolution and hence the people there went in whole-heartedly for acquisition of literacy when they were told that literacy was essential to their well-being as a nation. In India we got our freedom by methods which have nothing to do with what may be called a political revolution. The travails of the birth of freedom were, no doubt, gone through by our respected leaders, but the common man went on his way unaffected. In fact, it will not be an exaggeration to say that one day we got up and found ourselves to be a free nation. Hardly anything changed around us except that the hand of the Britisher was held back for good. People who knew what freedom meant were no doubt delighted to know that they had got it at last. But the masses—the illiterate masses who form more than 80% of our nation—have not yet fully felt the change. The result was, or rather is, that the masses remain almost impervious to any attempt made to raise their status either culturally or economically.

I have referred to this fundamental difference in the mentality of a free India and a free U.S.S.R., because many times a question is asked, ' If the U.S.S.R. can wipe out illiteracy through adult instruction with-

in a decade or two, why should India not be able to do so?' It is not the want of money that can hinder progress, when the whole nation like one man sets about to achieve an object. The need for introducing 'a psychological ferment' in the mentality of the illiterate and ignorant masses of our country is the great thing that is needed at this juncture. This can only be done by our great leaders holding up before the masses the ideal of a literate India and asking everyone whom they can persuade to do the same. There are a hundred and one ways of doing this and if our leaders do seriously believe in a literate India, they can do a lot to remove the apathy of the masses and make them literacy-minded. Once the psychological ferment is started, it will spread of itself to the entire population, as it did in the U.S.S.R. or in Turkey under the leadership of the Ata Turk. It may be mentioned in passing that the reported literacy percentage of Turkey today is somewhere near 50.

I may state here that acquisition of literacy has a special significance in the cultural, social and political advancement of a nation where the great majority of the people are absolutely illiterate. Lectures, Cinema Shows, Exhibitions, Radio and Entertainment Programmes have, no doubt, a value in a society where the written word is a mystery to the many. But in the end, such programmes do not keep behind a lasting effect. The word is heard, the picture is seen and enjoyed. Both have some effect on the mind of those who heard the word or saw the picture. It is to be left to imagination as to what permanent effect these things will leave behind. Moreover, if a hundred are given the opportunity to listen to or to see, a lakh have to be kept untouched. On the other hand with the help of the written word, millions may be taught to realise the good things that we wish them to pick up. Besides, they will have the written word at their command, any time they may be inclined to make use of it. The ignorant millions of India—the land of villages—will remain inaccessible, in most parts, to itinerant agencies of culture. Written word alone will have the chance to cover the entire field. I, therefore, feel that in the entire field of social education, literacy must be given its due place which, to me, is second to none. Other programme must be made to move round the pivot of the literacy programme.

I am fully conscious of the various efforts that the several State and private agencies in our country, particularly the Central Ministry of Education, are making to promote the cause of adult literacy. The production of the follow-up literature for neo-literates is, I think, the most welcome attempt. If successfully carried out, that will remove the greatest need of the movement. The National Seminars on Social Education are yielding good dividends by clearing up many knotty points that confront the workers in the field of Social Education.

Films, film-strips and other visual aids, the production of which is taken up by the Central Ministry of Education, will fill up a great need. There are several other new features that have been introduced to widen and enrich education of the adults. All these things point out that adult education or social education, has come to its own. But in the flush of our achievements we must not forget that what we have done or are trying to do so far, is only a drop in the ocean. Thousands are being touched while millions are left untouched. In any attempt to educate the masses, whether it be the education of children in schools or the social education of adults, it must be realised that education produces its best effect not when it trickles slowly, but when it is rapidly universalised. "Education can be so gradual as to allow the educated few to be absorbed afresh by the inertia and habits of the uninstructed many." Throughout the British Rule this principle was never fully realised. Let us hope that our Governments—State and Central—will not fail to take note of it.

Among the several needs of the Social Education Movement the most important one is the setting up of a Research Organisation. I am conscious that Government of India is taking steps in this direction. I am referring to it here because I feel that, in the interest of the movement itself, no time should be lost in setting up the Research Organisation. Among other investigations that might be taken up, I would plead for immediate selection of the following problems for investigation:

(1) What is the minimum time required for acquisition of literacy by an adult illiterate, particularly in the new set-up of social education programme?

(2) What particular method or methods of imparting literacy to illiterate adults are most effective?

(3) What age-group among the adults is most responsive to instruction in literacy?

(4) What methods are best fruitful in checking the general irregularity of adults attending adult classes?

(5) What should be the average number of adults to be assembled in one class for adult literacy?

These are only a few points suggested for immediate investigation. There are many more that can be taken up for investigation with a view to securing efficiency and minimising wastage in the programmes for adult literacy. Care must, however, be taken to correlate the investigations carried out at several places. Otherwise, the findings at one place may not be useful at some other place. In this matter, therefore, it is the Central Ministry of Education that must take up the responsibility aided by Investigation Boards set up by the States.

Another field in which we have made little progress is the winning over our school and college population to lend a helping hand in the movement of adult literacy in the general programme of Social Education. If properly approached, this young section of our population can do immense service to the cause of social education in its broadest sense. I am conscious that this section of our population is on the move to help the cause of Community Service which has now come into the forefront. But the field must be considerably widened. I am sure if our great leaders take interest in this question, the young people will not fail to respond. How to achieve this object is a great question. But where there is a will, there is a way.

You are aware that there is a feeling which is gathering strength in our country that some sort of compulsion should be brought in to press the services of our young scholars for the cause of Social Education including, of course, the adult literacy programme. I feel that before compulsion is applied, it is necessary to rouse the young people to take part in social service. I have no doubt that the young people will respond. I do not think that serious efforts are made in this direction on a nation-wide scale. The efforts made so far are sporadic. And yet the experience gained clearly points out to the possibility that this section of our population will come forward to do what we expect of them, if the problem is properly handled and financed by liberal help from the Central and State Governments. Compulsion can come later on. If it is suddenly ushered in, there will be a reaction which will lead to frustration and disappointment.

Should the adults be compelled by legislation to acquire literacy? This question is sometimes discussed as an academic proposition. In a land where compulsion for school-going children has not succeeded, the proposal to introduce general compulsion for the illiterate adults for literacy is out of the question. It is too premature even to think about it.

There is, however, a corner in which it is possible to think of compulsion in the field of Adult Education. Our country is now being rapidly industrialised. The centres of industrial concerns are not only increasing in number, but growing in strength of labour population. It may be fairly estimated that more than 90 per cent of the labour population in these industrial centres is absolutely illiterate. Could we not introduce some sort of compulsion both on the employers and the employees, so that a wide network of adult literacy classes may be spread throughout these industrial centres? I am fully conscious that this question is fraught with many difficulties. Considering, however, the vast potentialities of such a measure, I appeal to those in authority to get this question investigated on an all-India basis, as early as possible.

Even here persuasion can be tried before compulsion, with some success. I do not know whether the employers of large-scale labour have anywhere in this country come forward to help the movement of adult literacy. But I know one place where persuasion has succeeded in inducing the employers to help materially in the Adult Literacy Movement. In the City of Bombay, the Bombay City Social Education Committee has succeeded in maintaining a fairly large number of classes for adult literacy in the premises of some of the textile mills and other industrial concerns in the city. The employers meet the entire expenses of these classes. Today 60 industrial concerns are co-operating in this cause. The number of adult classes is 350 instructing nearly 10,000 adults—men and women. The total expenditure borne by the employers comes to about Rs. 35,000 a year. I am glad to state that the movement is gathering strength, thanks to the personal efforts made by some members and officers of the Committee and to the public-spirited employers of these industrial concerns. The adult classes are held outside the time of the attendance hours which a labourer in a mill has to put in daily. The best results will, however, follow if the employers could be persuaded to allow the adult worker to attend a literacy class within the prescribed time of attendance. As I have already said this question is fraught with many difficulties, mostly of an economic nature. I may, however, mention here that sometime ago, an American industrial concern in Bombay—the Corn Products Co. Ltd.—allowed its illiterate adults to attend literacy classes arranged in the premises of the concern and the time of attendance at such classes was counted in the prescribed time of attendance in the factory. This is, no doubt, a solitary instance. But I think if our employers of labour are made to realise that instructed labour will, in the long run, put in more efficient work, some employers may come forward to try the experiment carried on by the Corn Products concern. The recent introduction of the Industrial Labour Health Insurance Schemes is a sign which points out to the fact that the employers of Industrial labour in this country will not be impervious to overtures made in the right spirit and by right persons to lend a helping hand in the national need of removing illiteracy from our Motherland.

Before I close, I wish to bring to your notice a new scheme introduced by the Bombay City Social Education Committee (of which I happen to be a Vice-President) for the purpose of training illiterate adults to read. The name given to the scheme is "The Bombay Scheme of Self-Study Reading Cards". The Bombay Committee, since its inception in 1939, has been following the system of class-room instruction for the purpose of imparting literacy to illiterate adults. It has, however, been found by experienced spread over a long period, that the system has to face several difficulties. The adults learning in the classes are of different ages and of different cultural levels and hence

they differ in their capacity to learn. The adults are almost all earners and hence they do not find it always convenient to come together to the class daily at the time fixed for the class. On account of this almost habitual irregularity of attendance, the teacher is unable to follow successfully the class method of teaching. He is obliged, very often, to resort to individual teaching on account of the unequal progress of the adults. This leads to a waste of time, energy and money. It was, therefore, felt that the principle of self-learning, if introduced, has a very important place in the field of adult literacy work, provided suitable means of learning through self-study are made available to the illiterate adults. The Committee has, therefore, evolved the Scheme of Self-Study Reading Cards. The Committee has also noted that a similar type of scheme is being followed for the last two or three years in Indonesia in teaching the illiterate adults to read.

The method adopted in these cards is the association of pictures and words. Suitable pictures are associated with easy words. Most of our Indian languages being phonetic, are quite suitable for the adoption of this method. The pictures selected are of objects commonly known to the adults and hence they can easily 'read' the pictures and so can automatically read the words placed below the pictures. This leads the adults to recognise letters of the word used to show the picture. One card contains four pictures and four words, each word having two new letters. There are also other letters and words for practice on each card. The adult can master the words and through them the letters by repetition. The usual letters—consonants and vowels and their combinations and also some conjunct consonants—are covered in 20 cards. The Committee has, a short time back, launched the scheme in two centres by way of experiment.

These Reading Cards are based on the principle of self-learning which demands individual attention and diligence. No class room is required, nor any formal class teaching. The Scheme eliminates the need of a regular instructor. The adult can learn to read almost intuitively, or if some guidance is required, it can be had from anyone who can read—be he a literate adult or a school child. The adult can learn to read anywhere and at any time. As the cards are small enough to be carried by the adult in his pocket, he can choose his own time of study. He can devote as much time as he can spare, for the task. The Self-Study Cards are expected to be of special help to adult women who, as a rule, are unable to attend classes. They will open a fruitful field of special work for those who may be able to spare occasionally some time for such work. With the help of these cards School and College students may particularly be able to do useful service in the cause of Adult Education.

It is not the intention of the Committee to leave the adult after he has mastered these cards. His real adult education will begin when he has proved by his own exertion, that he is eager for learning and means business. The adults so instructed by their own study will attend classes which the Committee will start for their further instruction. This in short is the " Bombay Scheme of Self-Study Reading Cards ". We are not in a position to say anything definitely about the result of the Scheme which was introduced on a very limited scale a short time ago. But I may say that the indications are that the Scheme will prove beneficial and will yield good results, eliminating many difficulties that are met with today in the class-room method of instructing the illiterate adult in the first step of literacy instruction which is to acquire the ability to read the written word.

APPENDIX I

Students who have obtained a Research Degree under the guidance of Shri R. V. Parulekar

S. No.	*Name*	*Degree obtained*	*Subject of the Thesis*
1.	Shri Patankar N. V. 1945	M.Ed.	History of Education in Poona during the British Period—1821 to 1942.
2.	Shri Samant B. B. 1945	Ph.D.	A Survey of the Teaching of Mathematics in Secondary Schools.
3.	Shri Narvane V. M. 1947	M.Ed.	Primary Education in India—1931 to 1941.
4.	Smt. Manohar P. M. 1948	M.Ed.	A Study of the English Readers most current in the Schools of the Province of Bombay.
5.	Kumari Naik C. H. 1949	Ph.D.	Education of Women in the Province of Bombay.
6.	Shri Gajendragadkar N. G. 1951	M.Ed.	A Survey of the Educational Activities of Boys in Secondary Schools of Kolhapur City.
7.	Smt. Beena Gokhale 1951	Ph.D.	Buddhist Education in India and Abroad.
8.	Smt. Madhuri R. Shah 1951	Ph.D.	Problem of Educational Administration in India.
9.	Shri Desai D. M. 1952	Ph.D.	Universal, Compulsory, Free and Secular Education.
10.	Shri Ferozuddin Sayed 1952	Ph.D.	Shah Walli Ullahi Philosophy of Education.
11.	Smt. Manohar P. M. 1953	Ph.D.	Reading Interests of Marathi Boys and Girls at the Secondary Stage.
12.	Shri Sohoni B. K. 1953	Ph.D.	Testing of Temperament and Character of Children.
13.	Shri Shevaramaya D. 1954	Ph.D.	Students' Free Activity and Achievement.
14.	Shri Deshpande N. A. 1955	Ph.D.	The Jain System of Education.

APPENDIX II

List of Volumes published so far in the Narayanrao Topiwala Memorial Educational Research Series

Volume No.	*Full Title*	*Name of Editor*
I.	A Survey of Indigenous Education in the Province of Bombay (1820–1830).	R. V. Parulekar.
II.	Indian Education in Parliamentary Papers—Part I (1832).	A. N. Basu.
III.	Selections from the Records of the Government of Bombay: Education: Part I (1819–52).	R. V. Parulekar.
IV.	Selections from Educational Records (Bombay): Part II (1815–1840).	R. V. Parulekar and C. L. Bakshi.

All these Volumes have been published by the Asia Publishing House, Bombay, and are priced at Rs. 15 each.

The Fifth Volume of the Series is in preparation.

SHRI R. V. PARULEKAR'S 71st BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

President:

SHRI S. K. PATIL

Vice-Presidents:

SHRI N. D. SAMANT
SHRI K. K. SHAH
SHRI RAMZANALLY P. EBRAHIM

Secretaries:

SHRI V. V. BAMBARDEKAR
SHRI A. N. SAMANT

Treasurer:

SHRI V. R. VAGH

Members:

SHRI N. P. SAMANT
SHRI C. L. BAKSHI
SHRI N. B. RANGANEKAR
SHRI N. SALIVATEESWARAN
SHRI V. P. KHANOLKAR
SHRI GOVINDJI SOONERJI
SHRI K. T. MANTRI
SHRI S. D. REGE
SHRI D. T. SAMANT
SHRI M. S. GAWANKAR
SHRI S. L. GODBOLE
